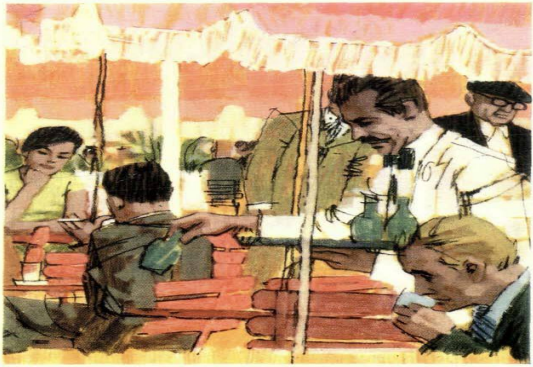
argosy

THE NEW HEMINGWAY



and 12 brilliant stories

July Australia 3/6 New Zealand 3/6

argosy

Vol. XXV No. 7 **JULY 1964**

Over Now to You	*Cartoon by Graham*	**2**
A Moveable Feast	**Ernest Hemingway**	**4**
	Decoration by Edith Maclean	
Going to Llangadock	**Dylan Thomas**	**17**
Further Education	**John Wain**	**23**
You Meet Such Interesting People!		**44**
Comfort from Capricorn	**Elizabeth Lemarchand**	**47**
Love on a Dark Street	**Irwin Shaw**	**59**
Secret Police	**Geoffrey Household**	**76**
	Illustration by Whittlesea	
One for the Record	**Youngman Carter**	**87**
Lord of Life	**Gerald Sparrow**	**92**
	Illustration by Langhammer	
Traveller's Joy		**100**
Mrs. Sale's Mountain	**Robert Morley**	**103**
	Illustration by Mary Dinsdale	
Murderer of Nancy	**Charles Dickens**	**111**
A Set of Sparklers		**118**
The Knife	**Ann Drysdale**	**121**
Killer in the Rain :		
Mandarin's Jade	**Raymond Chandler**	**128**
	Illustrations by Robb	
	Cartoons by Thelwell	
Leisure Pleasure	*Decorations by Bill Banks*	**161**
Ten Minute Crossword		**167**
Argosy Crossword		**168**

Cover by Wilson McLean

Acknowledgments are due for permission to reprint copyright material by the following authors : to Jonathan Cape and Glidrose Productions for the extract by Ian Fleming ; to Jonathan Cape for the Hemingway extracts ; to Cassell and International Authors N.V. for Robert Graves' poem from " Collected Poems 1959 " ; to J. M. Dent for the story from " Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog " © Dylan Thomas 1940 ; to Faber and Faber for the extracts by Edward Gifford and John Moore ; to Faber and Faber and Mrs. J. W. Dunne for her husband's excerpt ; to Gollancz for the extracts by Monica Curtis and Ludovic Kennedy ; to Hamish Hamilton for the extract by Nancy Mitford ; to Methuen for Thelwell cartoons from " A Place of Your Own " ; to Oldbourne Press for the extract from " Memoirs of a Tattooist " ; to Oxford University Press for Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem ; to Penguin Books for R. M. Lucey's puzzle ; to The Society of Authors and Rosamond Lehmann for her extract ; to Yale University Press for the poem from " A Crackling of Thorns " ; " A Seizure of Limericks " © Conrad Aiken 1964
" Killer in the Rain " by Raymond Chandler is published by Hamish Hamilton

© Fleetway Publications Ltd., 1964

A Fleetway magazine

AN INDEPENDENT INCOME AT HOME

can be earned by postal tuition in Short Story and Article writing. During 45 years of personal coaching by top authors and journalists, the Premier School of Journalism has brought independence and happiness to thousands.

Just a few of our successes:

" I found that the intrinsic value of your school lay in the ENCOURAGEMENT you gave to students. This encouragement was particularly valuable to me, being naturally an indolent person !

" You will be pleased to hear that I have now published 112 novels and 16 serials, countless articles, mostly travel, and a serial to 'The People.'

" It was the Premier School of Journalism that started me off !"

D.E.

" You will be pleased to hear that I have earned £90 after only four lessons, costing me a mere £10."

D.T.

" I would like to say that this course is getting more and more interesting as it goes on. I am astonished at the amount of personal work that goes into it from your side."

T.B.

" Since taking your General Course I have sold hundreds of articles to French newspapers. This says a great deal for your tuition as I am a Frenchman, writing in French !

" An established journalist with an independent income, I OWE IT ALL to the Premier School."

J.B.

" Since enrolling with the Premier School I have had considerable success in South Africa. Up to date I have sold 11 novelettes, 22 short stories and 10 articles. These successes have COVERED THE COST OF THE COURSE THIRTY TIMES.

" I couldn't have succeeded without your help."

R.A.

" IN JUST TWO LESSONS I have sold two stories to top magazines."

T.B.

" Thank you for your cheque for £750," writes a former mental nurse after we had sold for him an article idea to 'The People'.

Write or 'phone for free copy of "You in Print" or send a specimen of your writing for a free criticism without obligation to :

PREMIER SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM LTD.,

(FOUNDED 1919) 53 FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.
FLE 7159. 24 HOUR SERVICE

Over now to you

Sumer is icumen in and

Argosy readers take to the road

WE were not in the least surprised at a motorist's recent claim in court that a parking-meter went beserk, made angry noises at him, and swallowed his ignition key. We have long believed that machines suffer not only from metal fatigue but also from metal psychosis—they sense our dependance on and antagonism to them, and react with mounting frenzy. Our own car, for instance, biddable up to a point, begins working to rule after any run of over a hundred miles. It will then not start on an uphill slope until it has rested for one-and-a-quarter hours. Experts in garages all over the country have searched—and will search—in vain for the cause of this phenomenon. There *is* no rational explanation. It is the car's mute protest against over-involvement.

Similarly, anybody who has owned a sewing machine knows how devilish they can turn when they feel they are being put upon. We have a cousin with a machine of a most reputable make: seventy years old and in good order. It will sew impeccably for two hours; at the end of that period it demands a rest break. Ignore this, and you unloose an avalanche of trouble. The thread breaks, the stitches lengthen and shorten unpredictably, the seam appears correct on the upper side of the cloth, but underneath is a total mare's nest of loops, swags, and tangles, about fifty yards of wasted thread per inch. As a last resort the machine will break its needle and seize up. Yet leave it alone, don't touch it for two hours, and, hey presto! all is well again, it will sew perfectly once more.

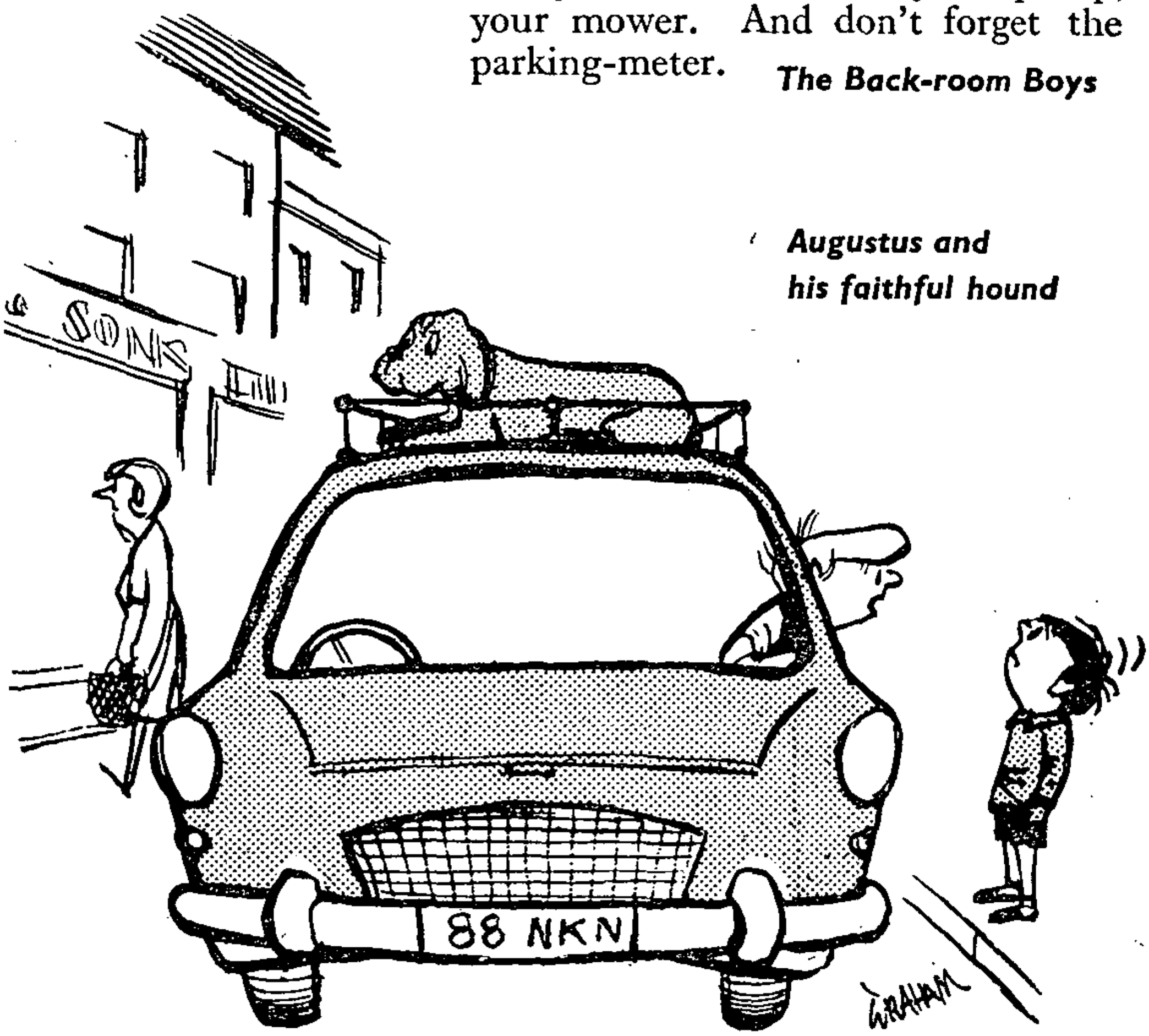
Inanimate things just get fed up with us, that's the truth of the matter. The parking-meter was probably feeling underprivileged.

We have a friend who can't stop fiddling with his plumbing system. Not long ago builders who were doing some job in his

house went off for the night leaving his main storage tank empty and disconnected. His family would have been quite happy to drink cider till next day but not he: he had the bright idea of connecting a hose to the mains tap, leading it up the stairs to the tank in the attic, and turning on the tap. Then he went off to read Argosy. Presently he heard a thumping and splashing on the stairs; the hose had managed to skip out of the tank—you know that absolutely paranoid vivacity which inspires full hoses. He managed to get the hose back into the tank and returned to Argosy. When the water next started splashing down the stairs it was because the tank was overflowing. Full of ingenuity and zeal, our friend led the lower end of the hose out of a window to dispose of the surplus hundred yards of water, but he forgot to take the top end out of the tank. In no time he had siphoned his tank empty again, but there was plenty of water elsewhere in the house. Our appliances do not like us to ignore them.

Moral: Machines have nerves, like you and me. Don't be selfish; when buying your own Argosy, get extra copies for your car, your electric drill, your pump, your mower. And don't forget the parking-meter.

The Back-room Boys



Augustus and his faithful hound

"If he travels inside he gets car sick."

Larger than lifesize, bearded, virile, addicted to all the tougher forms of sport, Hemingway enjoyed hunting anything big enough to fight back, ocean fishing, climbing, skiing. He married three times.

Born in Illinois in 1898, Hemingway started as a reporter on his local paper. In World War I he volunteered for an American Ambulance Unit and later joined the Italian Arditi —the beginnings, of course, of his most famous book *A Farewell to Arms*.

After the war, still young and desperately poor, he made one of the original group of American expatriates living in Paris.

This is the first in a new series by Hemingway, which Argosy is proud to be presenting over the next few months. These brilliant sketches of his early hard-up days in Paris were written towards the end of his life—but they are so vivid and immediate that it's hard to believe they weren't jotted down at the time, over a mug of beer and a plateful of pommes à l'huile at a café table in the place St-Michel.

"If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast." Ernest Hemingway to a friend, 1950.

YOU got very hungry when you did not eat enough in Paris because all the bakery shops had such good things in the windows and people ate outside at tables on the pavement so that you saw and smelt the food.

When you had given up journalism and were writing nothing that anyone in America would buy, explaining at home that you were lunching out with someone, the best place to go was the Luxembourg Gardens where you saw and smelt nothing to eat all the way from the place de l'Observatoire to the rue de Vaugirard. There you could always go into the Luxembourg Museum and all the paintings were sharpened and clearer and more beautiful if you were belly-empty, hollow-hungry. I learnt to understand Cézanne much better and to see truly how

from the new

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

A MOVEABLE FEAST

he made landscapes when I was hungry. I used to wonder if he were hungry too when he painted; but I thought possibly it was only that he had forgotten to eat. It was one of those unsound but illuminating thoughts you have when you have been sleepless or hungry. Later I thought Cézanne was probably hungry in a different way.

After you came out of the Luxembourg you could walk down the narrow rue Férou to the place St-Sulpice and there were still no restaurants, only the quiet square with its benches and trees. There was a fountain with lions, and pigeons walked on the pavement and perched on the statues of the bishops. There was the church and there were shops selling religious objects and vestments on the north side of the square.

From this square you could not go farther towards the river without passing shops selling fruits, vegetables, wines, or bakery and pastry shops. But by choosing your way carefully you could work to your right round the grey-and-white stone church and reach the rue de l'Odéon and turn up to your right towards Sylvia Beach's bookshop and on your way you did not pass too many places where things to eat were sold. The rue de l'Odéon was bare of eating places until you reached the square, where there were three restaurants.

By the time you reached 12 rue de l'Odéon your hunger was contained but all of your perceptions were heightened again. The photographs looked different and you saw books that you had never seen before.

"You're too thin, Hemingway," Sylvia would say. "Are you eating enough?"

"Sure."

"What did you eat for lunch?"

My stomach would turn over and I would say, "I'm going home for lunch now."

"At three o'clock?"

"I didn't know it was that late."

"Adrienne said the other night she wanted to have you and Hadley for dinner. We'd ask Fargue. You like Fargue, don't you? Or Larbaud. You like him. I know you like him. Or anyone you really like. Will you speak to Hadley?"

"I know she'd love to come."

"I'll send her a pneu. Don't you work so hard now that you don't eat properly."

"I won't."

"Get home now before it's too late for lunch."

"They'll save it."

"Don't eat cold food either. Eat a good hot lunch."

"Did I have any mail?"

"I don't think so. But let me look."

She looked and found a note and looked up happily and then opened a door in her desk.

"This came while I was out," she said. It was a letter and it felt as though it had money in it. "Wedderkop," Sylvia said.

"It must be from *Der Querschnitt*. Did you see Wedderkop?"

"No. But he was here with George. He'll see you. Don't worry. Perhaps he wanted to pay you first."

"It's six hundred francs. He says there will be more."

"I'm awfully glad you reminded me to look. Dear Mr. Awfully Nice."

"It's damned funny that Germany is the only place I can sell anything. To him and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*."

"Isn't it? But don't you worry ever. You can sell stories to Ford," she teased me.

"Thirty francs a page. Say one story every three months in the *Transatlantic*. Story five pages long makes one hundred and fifty francs a quarter. Six hundred francs a year."

"But Hemingway, don't worry about what they bring now. The point is that you can write them."

"I know. I can write them. But nobody will buy them. There is no money coming in since I quit journalism."

"They will sell. Look. You have the money for one right there."

"I'm sorry, Sylvia. Forgive me for speaking about it."

"Forgive you for what? Always talk about it or about anything. Don't you know all writers ever talk about is their troubles? But promise me you won't worry and that you'll eat enough."

"I promise."

"Then get home now and have lunch."

Outside on the rue de l'Odéon I was disgusted with myself for having complained about things. I was doing what I did of my own free will and I was doing it stupidly. I should have bought a large piece of bread and eaten it instead of skipping a meal. I could taste the brown lovely crust. But it is dry in your mouth without something to drink. You goddamn complainer. You dirty, phoney saint and martyr, I said to myself. You quit journalism of your own accord. You have credit and Sylvia would have loaned you money. She has, plenty of times. Sure. And then next thing you would be compromising on something

else. Hunger is healthy and the pictures do look better when you are hungry. Eating is wonderful too and do you know where you are going to eat right now?

Lipp's is where you are going to eat, and drink too.

It was a quick walk to Lipp's, and every place I passed that my stomach noticed as quickly as my eyes or my nose made the walk an added pleasure. There were few people in the brasserie and when I sat down on the bench against the wall with the mirror in back and a table in front and the waiter asked if I wanted beer, I asked for a distingué, the big glass mug that held a litre, and for potato salad.

The beer was very cold and wonderful to drink. The pommes à l'huile were firm and marinated and the olive oil delicious. I ground black pepper over the potatoes and moistened the bread in the olive oil. After the first heavy draught of beer I drank and ate very slowly. When the pommes à l'huile were gone I ordered another serving and a cervelas. This was a sausage like a wide frankfurter split in two and covered with a special mustard sauce.

I mopped up all the oil and all of the sauce with bread and drank the beer slowly until it began to lose its coldness and then I finished it and ordered a demi and watched it drawn. It seemed colder than the distingué and I drank half of it.

I had not been worrying, I thought. I knew the stories were good and someone would publish them finally at home. When I stopped doing newspaper work I was sure the stories were going to be published. But every one I sent out came back. What had made me so confident was Edward O'Brien's taking the *My Old Man* story for the *Best Short Stories* book and then dedicating the book for that year to me. Then I laughed and drank some more beer. The story had never been published in a magazine and he had broken all his rules to take it for the book.

I laughed again and the waiter glanced at me. It was funny because, after all that, he had spelt the name wrong. It was one of two stories I had left when everything I had written was stolen in Hadley's suitcase that time at the Gare de Lyon when she was bringing the manuscripts down to me to Lausanne as a surprise, so I could work on them on our holidays in the mountains. She had put in the originals, the typescripts and the carbons, all in manila folders. The only reason I had the one story was that Lincoln Steffens had sent it out to some editor who sent it back. It was in the mail while everything else was stolen. The other story that I had was the one called *Up in Michigan*, written before Miss Stein had come to our flat. I had never had it copied because she said it was inaccrochable. It had been in a drawer somewhere.

So after we had left Lausanne and gone down to Italy I showed the racing story to O'Brien, a gentle, shy man, pale, with pale-blue eyes, and straight lanky hair he cut himself, who lived then as a boarder in a monastery up above Rapallo. It was a bad time and I did not think I could write any more then, and I showed the story to him as a curiosity, as you might show, stupidly, the binnacle of a ship you had lost in some incredible way, or as you might pick up your booted foot and make some joke about it if it had been amputated after a crash. Then, when he read the story, I saw he was hurt far more than I was. I had never seen anyone hurt by a thing other than death or unbearable suffering except Hadley when she told me about the things being gone. She had cried and cried and could not tell me.

I told her that no matter what the dreadful thing was that had happened nothing could be that bad, and whatever it was, it was all right and not to worry. We could work it out. Then, finally, she told me. I was sure she could not have brought the carbons too, and I hired someone to cover for me on my newspaper job. I was making good money then at journalism, and took the train for Paris. It was true all right, and I remember what I did in the night after I let myself into the flat and found it was true. That was over now and Chink had taught me never to discuss casualties; so I told O'Brien not to feel so bad. It was probably good for me to lose early work and I told him all that stuff you feed the troops. I was going to start writing stories again I said and, as I said it, only trying to lie so that he would not feel so bad, I knew that it was true.

Then I started to think in Lipp's about when I had first been able to write a story after losing everything. It was up in Cortina d'Ampezzo when I had come back to join Hadley there after the spring skiing which I had to interrupt to go on assignment to the Rhineland and the Ruhr. It was a very simple story called *Out of Season* and I had omitted the real end of it which was that the old man hanged himself. This was omitted on my new theory that you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted, and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood.

Well, I thought, now I have them so they do not understand them. There cannot be much doubt about that. There is most certainly no demand for them. But they will understand the same way that they always do in painting. It only takes time and it only needs confidence.

It is necessary to handle yourself better when you have to cut down on food so you will not get too much hunger-thinking.

Hunger is good discipline and you learn from it. And as long as they do not understand it you are ahead of them. Oh sure, I thought, I'm so far ahead of them now that I can't afford to eat regularly. It would not be bad if they caught up a little.

I knew I must write a novel. But it seemed an impossible thing to do when I had been trying with great difficulty to write paragraphs that would be the distillation of what made a novel. It was necessary to write longer stories now as you would train for a longer race. When I had written a novel before, the one that had been lost in the bag stolen at the Gare de Lyon, I still had the lyric facility of boyhood that was as perishable and as deceptive as youth was. I knew it was probably a good thing that it was lost, but I knew too that I must write a novel. I would put it off, though, until I could not help doing it. I was damned if I would write one because it was what I should do if we were to eat regularly. When I had to write it, then it would be the only thing to do and there would be no choice. Let the pressure build. In the meantime I would write a long story about whatever I knew best . . .

By this time I had paid the check and gone out and turned to the right and crossed the rue de Rennes so that I would not go to the Deux Magots for coffee and was walking up the rue Bonaparte on the shortest way home.

What did I know best that I had not written about and lost? What did I know about truly and care for the most? There was no choice at all. There was only the choice of streets to take you back fastest to where you worked. It went up Bonaparte to Guynemer, then to the rue d'Assas, up the rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs to the Closerie des Lilas.

I sat in a corner with the afternoon light coming in over my shoulder and wrote in the notebook. The waiter brought me a café crème and I drank half of it when it cooled and left it on the table while I wrote. When I stopped writing I did not want to leave the river where I could see the trout in the pool, its surface pushing and swelling smooth against the resistance of the log-driven piles of the bridge. The story was about coming back from the war but there was no mention of the war in it.

But in the morning the river would be there and I must make it and the country and all that would happen. There were days ahead to be doing that each day. No other thing mattered. In my pocket was the money from Germany so there was no problem. When that was gone some other money would come in.

All I must do now was stay sound and good in my head until morning when I would start to work again.

★

WHEN spring came, even the false spring, there were no problems except where to be happiest. The only thing that could spoil a day was people and if you could keep from making engagements, each day had no limits. People were always the limiters of happiness except for the very few that were as good as spring itself.

In the spring mornings I would work early while my wife still slept. The windows were open wide and the cobbles of the street were drying after the rain. The sun was drying the wet faces of the houses that faced the window. The shops were still shuttered. The goat-herd came up the street blowing his pipes and a woman who lived on the floor above us came out on to the sidewalk with a big pot. The goat-herd chose one of the heavy-bagged, black milk-goats and milked her into the pot while his dog pushed the others on to the sidewalk. The goats looked around, turning their necks like sightseers. The goat-herd took the money from the woman and thanked her and went on up the street piping and the dog herded the goats on ahead, their horns bobbing. I went back to writing and the woman came up the stairs with the goat milk. She wore her felt-soled cleaning shoes and I only heard her breathing as she stopped on the stairs outside our door and then the shutting of her door. She was the only customer for goat milk in our building.

I decided to go down and buy a morning racing paper. There was no quarter too poor to have at least one copy of a racing paper but you had to buy it early on a day like this. I found one in the rue Descartes at the corner of the place Contrescarpe. The goats were going down the rue Descartes and I breathed the air in and walked back fast to climb the stairs and get my work done. I had been tempted to stay out and follow the goats down the early-morning street. Before I started work again I looked at the paper. They were running at Enghien, the small, pretty and larcenous track that was the home of the outsider.

So that day after I had finished work we would go racing. Some money had come from the Toronto paper that I did newspaper work for and we wanted a long shot if we could find one. My wife had a horse one time at Auteuil named Chèvre d'Or that was a hundred and twenty to one and leading by twenty lengths when he fell at the last jump with enough savings on him to keep us six months. We tried never to think of that. We were ahead on that year until Chèvre d'Or.

"Do we have enough money to really bet, Tatie?" my wife asked.

"No. We'll just figure to spend what we take. Is there something else you'd rather spend it for?"

"Well," she said.

"I know. It's been terribly hard and I've been tight and mean about money."

"No," she said. "But—"

I knew how severe I had been and how bad things had been. The one who is doing his work and getting satisfaction from it is not the one poverty bothers. I thought of bathtubs and showers and toilets that flushed as things that inferior people to us had or that you enjoyed when you made trips, which we often made. There was always the public bath-house down at the foot of the street by the river. My wife had never complained once about these things any more than she cried about Chèvre d'Or when he fell. She had cried for the horse, I remembered, but not for the money. I had been stupid when she needed a grey lamb jacket and had loved it once she had bought it. I had been stupid about other things, too. It was all part of the fight against poverty that you never win except by not spending. Especially if you buy pictures instead of clothes. But then we did not think ever of ourselves as poor. We did not accept it. We thought we were superior people and other people that we looked down on and rightly mistrusted were rich. It had never seemed strange to me to wear sweatshirts for underwear to keep warm. It only seemed odd to the rich. We ate well and cheaply and drank well and cheaply and slept well and warm together and loved each other.

"I think we ought to go," my wife said. "We haven't been for such a long time. We'll take a lunch and some wine. I'll make good sandwiches."

"We'll go on the train and it's cheap that way. But let's not go if you don't think we should. Anything we'd do today would be fun. It's a wonderful day."

"I think we should go."

"You wouldn't rather spend it some other way?"

"No," she said arrogantly. She had the lovely high cheekbones for arrogance. "Who are we anyway?"

So we went out by the train from the Gare du Nord through the dirtiest and saddest part of town and walked from the siding to the oasis of the track. It was early and we sat on my raincoat on the fresh-cropped grass bank and had our lunch and drank from the wine bottle and looked at the old grandstand, the brown

wooden betting booths, the green of the track, the darker green of the hurdles, and the brown shine of the water jumps and the whitewashed stone walls and white posts and rails, the paddock under the new-leafed trees and the first horses being walked to the paddock. We drank more wine and studied the form in the paper and my wife lay down on the raincoat to sleep with the sun on her face.

I went over and found someone I knew from the old days at San Siro in Milan. He gave me two horses. "Mind, they're no investment. But don't let the price put you off."

We won the first with half of the money that we had to spend and he paid twelve to one, jumping beautifully, taking command on the far side of the course and coming in four lengths ahead. We saved half of the money and put it away and bet the other half on the second horse who broke ahead, led all the way over the hurdles and on the flat just lasted to the finish line with the favourite gaining on him with every jump and the two whips flailing. We went to have a glass of champagne at the bar under the stand and wait for the prices to go up.

"My, but racing is very hard on people," my wife said. "Did you see that horse come up on him?"

"I can still feel it inside me."

"What will he pay?"

"The cote was eighteen to one. But they may have bet him at the last."

The horses came by, ours wet, with his nostrils working wide to breathe, the jockey patting him.

"Poor him," my wife said. "We just bet."

We watched them go on by and had another glass of champagne and then the winning price came up: eighty-five. That meant he paid eighty-five francs for ten.

"They must have put a lot of money on at the end," I said.

But we had made plenty of money, big money for us, and now we had spring and money too. I thought that was all we needed. A day like that one, if you split the winnings one-quarter for each to spend, left a half for racing capital. I kept the racing capital secret and apart from all other capital.

Another day later that year when we had come back from one of our voyages and had good luck at some track again, we stopped at Prunier's on the way home, going in to sit at the bar after looking at all the clearly priced wonders in the window. We had oysters and crabe mexicain with glasses of Sancerre. We walked back through the Tuileries in the dark and stood and looked through the Arc du Carrousel up across the dark

gardens with the lights of the Concorde behind the formal darkness and then the long rise of lights towards the Arc de Triomphe. Then we looked towards the dark of the Louvre and I said, "Do you really think that the three arches are in line? These two and the Sempione in Milan?"

"I don't know, Tatie. They say so and they ought to know. Do you remember when we came out into the spring on the Italian side of the St. Bernard after the climb in the snow, and you and Chink and I walked down all day in the spring to Aosta?"

"Chink called it 'across the St. Bernard in street shoes.' Remember your shoes?"

"My poor shoes. Do you remember us having fruit cup at Biffi's in the Galleria with Capri and fresh peaches and wild strawberries in a tall glass pitcher with ice?"

"That time was what made me wonder about the three arches."

"I remember the Sempione. It's like this arch."

"Do you remember the inn at Aigle where you and Chink sat in the garden that day and read while I fished?"

"Yes, Tatie."

I remembered the Rhône, narrow and grey and full of snow-water and the two trout streams on either side, the Stockalper and the Rhône canal. The Stockalper was really clear that day and the Rhône canal was still murky.

"Do you remember when the horse-chestnut trees were in bloom and how I tried to remember a story that Jim Gamble, I think, told me about a wistaria vine and I couldn't remember it?"

"Yes, Tatie, and you and Chink always talking about how to make things true, writing them, and put them rightly and not describe. I remember everything. Sometimes he was right and sometimes you were right. I remember the lights and textures and the shapes you argued about."

Now we had come out of the gateway through the Louvre and crossed the street outside and were standing on the bridge leaning on the stone and looking down at the river.

"We all three argued about everything and always specific things and we made fun of each other. I remember everything we ever did and everything we ever said on the whole trip," Hadley said. "I do really. About everything . . ."

"I wish I could remember the story about the wistaria vine."

"It wasn't important. It was the vine that was important, Tatie."

"Do you remember I brought some wine from Aigle home to

the chalet? They sold it to us at the inn. They said it should go with the trout. We brought it wrapped in copies of *La Gazette de Lausanne*, I think."

"The Sion wine was even better. Do you remember how Mrs. Gangeswisch cooked the trout au bleu when we got back to the chalet? They were such wonderful trout, Tatie, and we drank the Sion wine and ate out on the porch with the mountainside dropping off below and we could look across the lake and see the Dent du Midi with the snow half down it and the trees at the mouth of the Rhône where it flowed into the lake."

"We always miss Chink in the winter and the spring."

"Always. And I miss him now when it is gone."

Chink was a professional soldier and had gone out to Mons from Sandhurst. I had met him first in Italy and he had been my best friend and then our best friend for a long time. He spent his leaves with us then.

"He's going to try to get leave this next spring. He wrote last week from Cologne."

"I know. We should live in this time now and have every minute of it."

"We're watching the water now as it hits this buttress. Look what we can see when we look up the river."

We looked and there it all was: our river and our city and the island of our city.

"We're too lucky," she said. "I hope Chink will come. He takes care of us."

"He doesn't think so."

"Of course not."

"He thinks we explore together."

"We do. But it depends on what you explore."

We walked across the bridge and were on our own side of the river. "Are you hungry again?" I said. "Us. Talking and walking."

"Of course, Tatie. Aren't you?"

"Let's go to a wonderful place and have a truly grand dinner."

"Where?"

"Michaud's?"

"That's perfect and it's so close."

So we walked up the rue des Saints-Pères to the corner of the rue Jacob, stopping and looking in the windows at pictures and at furniture. We stood outside of Michaud's restaurant reading the posted menu. Michaud's was crowded and we waited for people to come out, watching the tables where people already had their coffee.

We were hungry again from walking and Michaud's was an exciting and expensive restaurant for us. It was where Joyce ate with his family then, he and his wife against the wall, Joyce peering at the menu through his thick glasses, holding the menu up in one hand; Nora by him, a hearty but delicate eater; Giorgio thin, foppish, sleek-headed from the back; Lucia with heavy curly hair, a girl not quite yet grown; all of them talking Italian.

Standing there I wondered how much of what we had felt on the bridge was just hunger. I asked my wife and she said, "I don't know, Tatie. There are so many sorts of hunger. In the spring there are more. But that's gone now. Memory is hunger."

I was being stupid, and looking in the window and seeing two tournedos being served I knew I was hungry in a simple way.

"You said we were lucky today. Of course we were. But we had very good advice and information."

She laughed. "I didn't mean about the racing. You're such a literal boy. I meant lucky other ways."

"I don't think Chink cares for racing," I said, compounding my stupidity.

"No. He'd only care for it if he were riding."

"Don't you want to go racing any more?"

"Of course. And now we can go whenever we want again . . ."

It was a wonderful meal at Michaud's after we got in; but when we had finished and there was no question of hunger any more, the feeling that had been like hunger when we were on the bridge was still there when we caught the bus home. It was there when we came in the room and after we had gone to bed and made love in the dark, it was there. When I woke with the windows open and the moonlight on the roofs of the tall houses, it was there. I put my face away from the moonlight into the shadow but I could not sleep and lay awake thinking about it. We had both wakened twice in the night and my wife slept sweetly now with the moonlight on her face. I had to try to think it out and I was too stupid. Life had seemed so simple that morning when I had wakened and found the false spring and heard the pipes of the man with his herd of goats and gone out and bought the racing paper.

But Paris was a very old city and we were young and nothing was simple there, not even poverty, nor sudden money, nor the moonlight, nor right and wrong, nor the breathing of someone who lay beside you in the moonlight.

© Ernest Hemingway Ltd. 1964

Something's happening . . .
Grandpa's got his waistcoat on!

GOING TO LLANGADOCK

BY DYLAN THOMAS

IN THE middle of the night I woke from a dream full of whips and lariats as long as serpents, and runaway coaches on mountain passes, and wide, windy gallops over cactus fields, and I heard the old man in the next room crying, "Gee-up!" and "Whoa!" and trotting his tongue on the roof of his mouth.

It was the first time I had stayed in Grandpa's house. The floorboards had squeaked like mice as I climbed into bed, and the mice between the walls had creaked like wood as though another visitor was walking on them. It was a mild summer night, but curtains had flapped and branches beaten against the window. I had pulled the sheets over my head, and soon was roaring and riding in a book.

"Whoa there, my beauties!" cried Grandpa. His voice sounded very young and loud, and his tongue had powerful hoofs, and he made his bedroom into a great meadow. I thought I would see if he was ill, or had set his bedclothes on fire, for my mother had said that he lit his pipe under the blankets, and had warned me to run to his help if I smelt smoke in the night. I went on tiptoe through the darkness to his bedroom door, brushing against the furniture and upsetting a candlestick with a thump. When I saw there was a light in the room I felt frightened, and as I opened the door I heard Grandpa shout, "Gee-up!" as loudly as a bull with a megaphone.

He was sitting straight up in bed and rocking from side to side as though the bed were on a rough road; the knotted edges of the counterpane were his reins; his invisible horses stood in a shadow beyond the bedside candle. Over a white flannel night-shirt he was wearing a red waistcoat with walnut-sized brass buttons. The over-filled bowl of his pipe smouldered among his whiskers like a little, burning hayrick on a stick. At the sight of

me, his hands dropped from the reins and lay blue and quiet, the bed stopped still on a level road, he muffled his tongue into silence, and the horses drew softly up.

" Is there anything the matter, Grandpa? " I asked, though the clothes were not on fire. His face in the candlelight looked like a ragged quilt pinned upright on the black air and patched all over with goat-beards.

He stared at me mildly. Then he blew down his pipe, scattering the sparks and making a high, wet dog-whistle of the stem, and shouted, " Ask no questions."

After a pause, he said slyly, " Do you ever have nightmares, boy? "

I said, " No."

" Oh, yes, you do," he said.

I said I was woken by a voice that was shouting to horses.

" What did I tell you? " he said. " You eat too much. Who ever heard of horses in a bedroom? "

He fumbled under his pillow, brought out a small, tinkling bag, and carefully untied its strings. He put a sovereign in my hand, and said, " Buy a cake." I thanked him and wished him good night. As I closed my bedroom door, I heard his voice crying loudly and gaily, " Gee-up! gee-up! " and the rocking of the travelling bed.

In the morning I woke from a dream of fiery horses on a plain that was littered with furniture, and of large, cloudy men who rode six horses at a time and whipped them with burning bedclothes. Grandpa was at breakfast, dressed in deep black. After breakfast he said, " There was a terrible loud wind last night," and sat in his armchair by the hearth to make clay balls for the fire. Later in the morning he took me for a walk, through Johnstown village and into the fields on the Llanstephan road.

A man with a whippet said, " There's a nice morning, Mr. Thomas," and when he had gone, leanly as his dog, into the short-treed greenwood he should not have entered because of the notices, Grandpa said, " There, do you hear what he called you? Mister! "

We passed by small cottages, and all the men who leaned on the gates congratulated Grandpa on the fine morning. We passed through the wood full of pigeons, and their wings broke the branches as they rushed to the tops of the trees. Among the soft, contented voices and the loud, timid flying, Grandpa said, like a man calling across a field, " If you heard those old birds in the night you'd wake me up and say there were horses in the trees."

We walked back slowly, for he was tired, and the lean man stalked out of the forbidden wood with a rabbit held as gently over his arm as a girl's arm in a warm sleeve.

On the last day but one of my visit I was taken to Llanstephan in a governess cart pulled by a short, weak pony. Grandpa might have been driving a bison, so tightly he held the reins, so ferociously cracked the long whip, so blasphemously shouted warning to boys who played in the road, so stoutly stood with his gaitered legs apart and cursed the demon strength and wilfulness of his tottering pony.

"Look out, boy!" he cried when we came to each corner, and pulled and tugged and jerked and sweated and waved his whip like a rubber sword. And when the pony had crept miserably round each corner, Grandpa turned to me with a sighing smile, "We weathered that one, boy."

When we came to Llanstephan village at the top of the hill, he left the cart by the Edwinsford Arms and patted the pony's muzzle and gave it sugar, saying, "You're a weak little pony, Jim, to pull big men like us."

He had strong beer and I had lemonade, and he paid Mrs. Edwinsford with a sovereign out of the tinkling bag; she inquired after his health, and he said that Llangadock was better for the tubes. We went to look at the churchyard and the sea, and sat in the wood called the Sticks, and stood on the concert platform in the middle of the wood where visitors sang on midsummer nights and, year by year, the innocent of the village was elected mayor. Grandpa paused at the churchyard and pointed over the iron gate at the angelic headstones and the poor wooden crosses. "There's no sense in lying there," he said.

We journeyed back furiously: Jim was a bison again.

I woke late on my last morning, out of dreams where the Llanstephan sea carried bright sailing-boats as long as liners; and heavenly choirs in the Sticks, dressed in bards' robes and brass-buttoned waistcoats, sang in a strange Welsh to the departing sailors. Grandpa was not at breakfast; he rose early. I walked in the fields with a new sling, and shot at the Towy gulls and the rooks in the parsonage trees. A warm wind blew from the summer points of the weather; a morning mist climbed from the ground and floated among the trees and hid the noisy birds; in the mist and the wind my pebbles flew lightly up like hailstones in a world on its head. The morning passed without a bird falling.

I broke my sling and returned for the midday meal through the

parson's orchard. Once, Grandpa told me, the parson had bought three ducks at Carmarthen Fair and made a pond for them in the centre of the garden; but they waddled to the gutter under the crumbling doorsteps of the house, and swam and quacked there. When I reached the end of the orchard path, I looked through a hole in the hedge and saw that the parson had made a tunnel through the rockery between the gutter and the pond and had set up a notice in plain writing: *This way to the pond.*

The ducks were still swimming under the steps.

Grandpa was not in the cottage. I went into the garden, but Grandpa was not staring at the fruit trees. I called across to a man who leaned on a spade in the field beyond the garden hedge, "Have you seen my Grandpa this morning?"

He did not stop digging, and answered over his shoulder, "I seen him in his fancy waistcoat."

Griff, the barber, lived in the next cottage. I called to him through the open door, "Mr. Griff, have you seen my Grandpa?"

The barber came out in his shirtsleeves.

I said, "He's wearing his best waistcoat." I did not know if it was important, but Grandpa wore his waistcoat only in the night.

"Has Grandpa been to Llanstephan?" asked Mr. Griff anxiously.

"We went there yesterday in a little trap," I said.

He hurried indoors and I heard him talking in Welsh, and he came out again with his white coat on, and he carried a striped and coloured walking-stick. He strode down the village street and I ran by his side.

When we stopped at the tailor's shop, he cried out, "Dan!" and Dan Tailor stepped from his window where he sat like an Indian priest but wearing a derby hat. "Dai Thomas has got his waistcoat on," said Mr. Griff, "and he's been to Llanstephan."

As Dan Tailor searched for his overcoat, Mr. Griff was striding on. "Will Evans," he called outside the carpenter's shop, "Dai Thomas has been to Llanstephan, and he's got his waistcoat on."

"I'll tell Morgan now," said the carpenter's wife out of the hammering, sawing darkness of the shop.

We called at the butcher's shop and Mr. Price's house, and Mr. Griff repeated his message like a town crier.

We gathered together in Johnstown square. Dan Tailor had his bicycle, Mr. Price his pony trap. Mr. Griff, the butcher, Morgan Carpenter, and I climbed into the shaking trap, and we trotted off towards Carmarthen town. The tailor led the way, ringing his bell as though there were a fire, and an old woman

by the gate of a cottage at the end of the street ran inside like a pelted hen. Another woman waved a bright handkerchief.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

Grandpa's neighbours were as solemn as old men with black hats and jackets on the outskirts of a fair. Mr. Griff shook his head and mourned, "I didn't expect this again from Dai Thomas."

"Not after last time," said Mr. Price sadly. We trotted on, we crept up Constitution Hill, we rattled down into Lammas Street, and the tailor still rang his bell and a dog ran, squealing, in front of his wheels. As we clip-clopped over the cobbles that led down to the Towy bridge, I remembered Grandpa's nightly noisy journeys that rocked the bed and shook the walls, and I saw his gay waistcoat in a vision and his patchwork head tufted and smiling in the candlelight. The tailor before us turned round on his saddle, his bicycle wobbled and skidded. "I see Dai Thomas!" he cried.

The trap rattled on to the bridge, and I saw Grandpa there; the buttons of his waistcoat shone in the sun, he wore his tight, black Sunday trousers and a tall, dusty hat I had seen in a cupboard in the attic, and he carried an ancient bag.

He bowed to us. "Good morning, Mr. Price," he said, "and Mr. Griff and Mr. Morgan and Mr. Evans." To me, he said, "Good morning, boy."

Mr. Griff pointed his coloured stick at him.

"And what do you think you are doing on Carmarthen bridge in the middle of the afternoon," he said sternly, "with your best waistcoat and your old hat?"

Grandpa did not answer, but inclined his face to the river wind, so that his beard was set dancing and wagging as though he talked, and watched the coracle men move, like turtles, on the shore.

Mr. Griff raised his stunted barber's pole. "And where do you think you are going," he said, "with your old black bag?"

Grandpa said, "I am going to Llangadock to be buried."

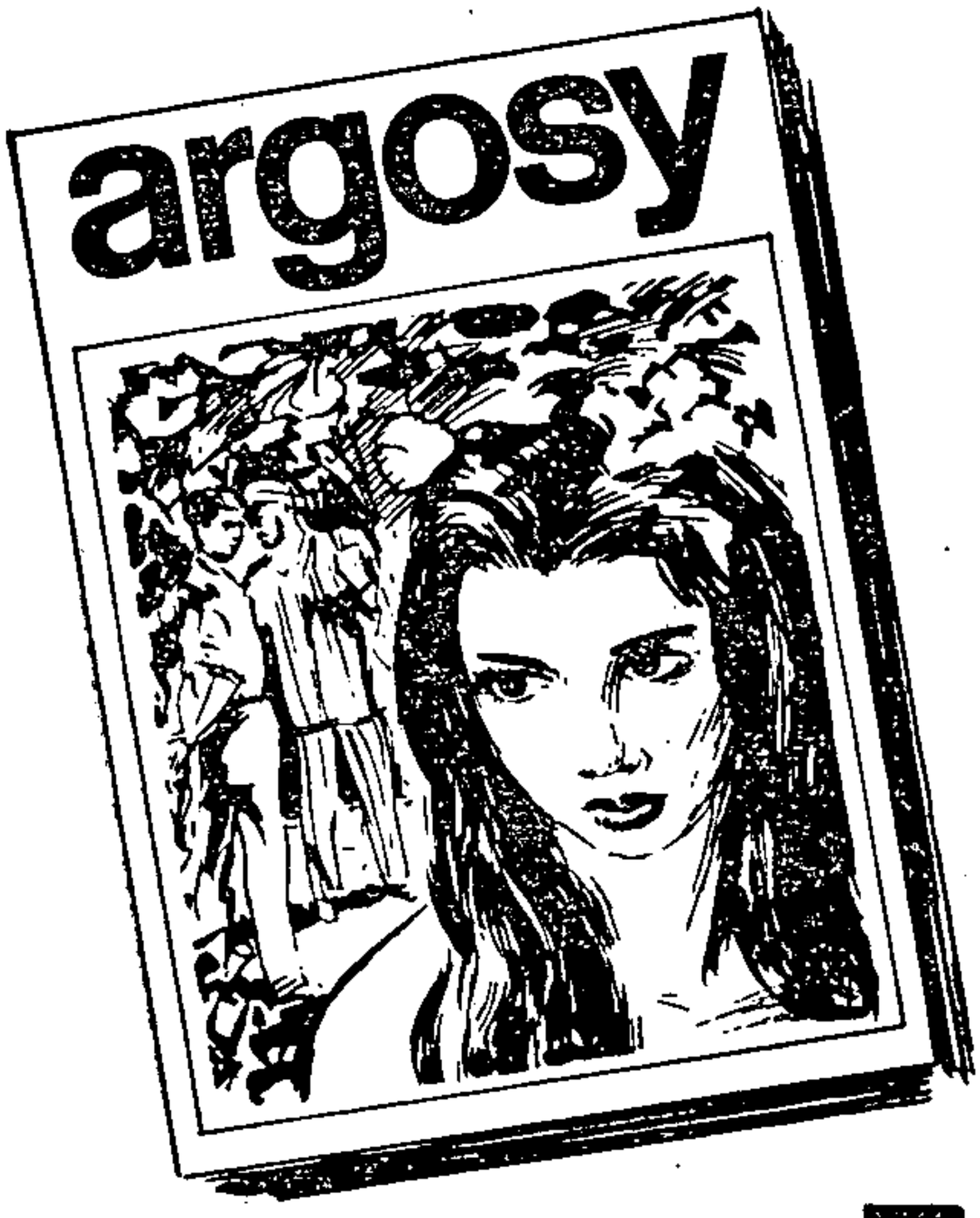
And he watched the coracle shells slip into the water lightly, and the gulls complain over the fish-filled water as bitterly as Mr. Price complained, "But you aren't dead yet, Dai Thomas."

For a moment Grandpa reflected, then: "There's no sense in lying dead in Llanstephan," he said. "The ground is comfy in Llangadock; you can twitch your legs without putting them in the sea."

His neighbours moved close to him. They said, "You aren't dead, Mr. Thomas."

"How can you be buried, then?"
"Nobody's going to bury you in Llanstephan."
"Come on home, Mr. Thomas."
"There's strong beer for tea."
"And cake."

But Grandpa stood firmly on the bridge, and clutched his bag to his side, and stared at the flowing river and the sky, like a prophet who has no doubt.



*

argosy

discovers

a new

DYLAN THOMAS!

- **Brilliantly, lyrically written for the film, The Beach of Falesa, and for his friend and countryman Richard Burton, who was chosen for the lead**
- **First told by that wonderful plot-spinner Robert Louis Stevenson—a most strange tale of the evil magic of the South Seas.**
- **And it is coming soon in argosy (the magazine with ALL the best short stories !)**

Married, but not as married as all that

FURTHER EDUCATION

BY JOHN WAIN

IT doesn't take much to raise a ghost. This one was raised by the voice of my secretary saying, " I thought I'd better put this letter aside for you to look at personally, Mr. Richards. It doesn't look like a thing that could go through the ordinary routine of the firm."

At that, I knew at once that something special, and probably irritating and/or money-losing, was coming my way. The firm's routines are pretty inclusive ones—I've seen to that—and anything that can't be absorbed by them means trouble, as a rule. But this wasn't trouble. Just a ghost. And I don't believe in ghosts, so why should I worry?

The letter said:

> Dear James,
>
> It must be all of twenty years since we met, though I must say our undergraduate days seem only yesterday to me. Perhaps that is the result of being continuously in the same surroundings, having stayed in Oxford all through the years and, indeed, at the same College. I don't recall having seen you at College reunions or celebrations of any kind, though of course these events are apt to be tiresome, and are avoided by many men who look back quite kindly on their student years and the associations that date from them. I hope this is the case with you, because I have a request to make and, if you don't remember our earlier contact with some sort of pleasure, it is bound to seem an intrusion . . .

Not a bad opening for a begging letter, eh? Plenty of dignity, a good selling line, a handshake that wasn't a backslap at the same time. (I could use that man!) I'd looked at the end of the letter, of course, to see the name, before I started to read it. But even if I hadn't, I'd have known by the end of the first paragraph. Poor

old Gerard. Bill Gerard, the one man I'd met at Oxford who could truly be called a scholar and a gentleman.

In my own case, as I freely admitted, I'd gone up to Oxford to have a good time and make a few contacts; I never made the slightest attempt to be a scholar, and though I can be a gentleman when I want to, I don't always want to. That's why, after twenty years, he was writing begging letters to me, instead of the other way round.

> After two decades of sitting still at Oxford, I am about to take a plunge into what seems, to me, the world of action. There is a big educational scheme afoot in East Africa, and I am going out there to play what part I can in it.

I skipped the next bit, just glancing over it and getting a name here and a figure there. Just like Bill Gerard to get all starry-eyed about a scheme for educating savages. I could see him, standing up there and talking about Plato to a lot of stark-naked buck Africans pretending to listen, while actually they were wondering what his liver would taste like fried or grilled. So that was the magnet that was drawing him away from his comfortable nest in Oxford—the fool. I felt the blood rising to my face with annoyance, the same annoyance I feel when these fools come round trying to bleed me white for crazy schemes . . .

I never argue with people like this, mind you. All you can do in this world is look after your own interests and let 'em get on with it.

So here was old Bill Gerard, coming back into my life after twenty years, asking me for money to set him up on a lecture platform in East Africa, talking about Plato to chaps with filed teeth. And the only thing I could think of was, What about Hazel? How will she fit into East Africa?

I called my secretary over, and was just going to dictate some kind of polite brush-off, when suddenly a wild idea struck me. I wanted to see Hazel again. Yes, and even Bill. It would amuse me to take a look at him too. They say you oughtn't to revisit your past, but I don't know. You get tired of looking ahead all the time.

So I went straight on and dictated a personal letter to Bill, suggesting that I should call at his house one weekend and discuss the possibility of contributing to his African fund.

He replied, and that was that. Sunday lunch at his house in North Oxford.

I brushed off any suggestion of taking Liz and the kids along for the trip. Told them it was business. I told Evans to bring the car round for me; and soon I was settled down in the back, lighting a cigarette and watching the motorway scenery fly past me. And not until that moment did it really hit me. I was going to see Hazel again. And I had no idea, absolutely none, why I was doing it.

I had enjoyed my time at Oxford. After all, when you've spent three years sitting on the deck of a destroyer, it's difficult not to enjoy a life as easy-going as that. It was irritating, in a way, to spend half of each year away from town, but it's only sixty miles—you can always get up to London for a show or a party, if you make the effort. Yes, all round it was very well worth it, especially as I met some people who've since proved very good friends, both in the business and outside it.

One thing it didn't do—and nobody was surprised—was to give me a thirst for book-learning. I'm a pretty well-informed person, and like to know the score, but as far as I could see, the kind of information that comes under the heading of scholarship was useless for any real purpose: all it did was clutter your brain. I went along with it, of course, sufficiently to pick up the magic letters after my name. They look nice on the firm's letterhead. And it had its interesting sides. But to be interested all the time, to give your days and nights to this stuff and never ask for anything better, you'd need a special kind of brain. And I only knew one man who had: Bill Gerard.

Bill lived for two things. His work, and Hazel. Where he got her I never knew. I mean, she was at the university, but how he came to nobble her was a mystery to all of us. She was the goods. Tall, copper-headed, with a build on her that made your mouth water. And she was inseparable from Bill. You never saw her without him. All of us, at different times, tried to slide in and steer her away, but there was never anything doing.

Why the surprise? Lots of girls, at that age, attach themselves to a man and ask nothing better than to spend all their time with him. It makes them feel secure. There are women who can't bear freedom. It makes them feel lost, uncertain of their own identity from day to day.

Granted. But Hazel didn't look at all that type. There was a wildness about her. In her eyes, in the fullness of her mouth, in her face with a touch of the Mongol in its high cheekbones, there was something that looked out at you and whatever that something may have been, it wasn't tameness or domesticity. So why did she stick to Bill, never showing any interest in anyone else, as the months lengthened out to years?

The explanation we all gave at the time, whenever we discussed it behind their backs, was that Bill was going to marry Hazel. In our eyes, that explained everything. Marriage, to us, was such a gigantic and unthinkable step, such a sacrifice in which the man gave up absolutely everything that made life worth living and only the girl benefited, that it seemed capable of resolving any puzzle. If Hazel already looked on Bill as her husband, well, naturally she was satisfied with him. I see now how shallow this explanation was. I know that the working of a girl's mind is more complex than that. Still, that was how we had it doped out, back in that first summer after the war.

Bill had been up at Oxford before the war, and got through part of his course then, which was the reason why he took his finals a year ahead of most of us. I remember hearing him say once, in the Common Room, that he wanted to get over the undergraduate stage as soon as he could. It struck me as summing up in a few words the difference between him and the rest of us. Undergraduate life—a perfect excuse for taking it easy for a bit—suited the rest of us very well, but Bill wanted to take a header into the deep waters of research and the rest of it that lay beyond.

I had just enough imagination to be able to tell the kind of thing that went on in his mind. All the big adventures happened to him when he was sitting still. He had inward-looking eyes—even when he was looking into your face he was only seeing you mechanically, so to speak. His eyes only took on the sparkle of real interest when he was looking at a book, taking it down from the shelf and fingering it, leafing through the pages to see if it would interest him. And, of course, when he looked at Hazel. He was quite sure she interested him.

Well, I'd watched for my chance with the rest. And now, twenty years later, I was sitting back in my car, streaming down the motorway, with lots of money in the bank and everything going very well—nice wife and kids, feeling as young as ever I did and certainly nothing like old enough to live in the past—and yet where was I going? To Bill's house, to see Hazel. Raising a ghost when I don't even believe in ghosts . . .

I don't, myself, use the expression " in love," because it seems to me that that kind of biological need isn't love. Or, if it is, then I can claim to have been a great lover for years, in my single-minded devotion to grilled steak. Needs are needs, not ideals. Still, there are certain times and places in which it's very difficult not to fall into the kind of slushy idiom in which you speak of a yen for a girl as " love," and Oxford in May and June is like that.

If you've ever been there at that time, you won't need me to fill in the details. The young fresh grass, the blossom, and over it all that inciting river-smell, all weeds and minnows, that rises from the Thames and spreads over the whole town, suggesting lazy afternoons and indiscretions in punts. Add a few all-night College dances, with heavy flower-scents coming through the dark summer night, and everybody's well and truly launched. It all puts a young man into the state where, if the right girl isn't there for him to project his " love " fantasies on to, he'll go ahead and project them on to the wrong one.

Good fun? Brings a sentimental tear to the eye? Perhaps, if it works out right. For me, it didn't. I made the kind of mistake that's so difficult to understand when you look back on it at forty. I got steamed up over the wrong girl. Bill's girl. Oh, I tried to be sensible. I told myself that other girls had tawny eyes, and high cheekbones, and lithe, purposeful bodies. But it was no good—I wanted Hazel. And she was Bill's.

Having tried to be sensible and given that up, I tried the other thing. Full steam ahead and crash in. Worshipping from afar isn't my line. When I want things I go and get them, and at least if I don't get them I leave the marks of my teeth and nails in them for all to see.

At first I tried to play it cool, waiting for the odd moment when Bill's back was turned and slipping in the casual invitation to come and drink a glass of sherry in my rooms. And, if she had turned up, I'd have raped her and let the chips fall where they may. But it was always, " Can I bring Bill? " and then, of course, I'd be landed with a situation I couldn't face, and would have to squirm out of it somehow.

Things went on like this until I heard from somewhere that they were going to get married straight away, as soon as Bill had got his degree. That stunned me. I remember the moment I first heard about it. My knees literally sagged and I felt I had to sit down. Of course I'd known they were booked to get married, but that was comfortably in the future. I'd never realised they were going to be about, in Oxford, as man and wife, so that I'd always be running into them. Because, as I learnt at the same time, Bill was more or less certain to stay on. They were keeping a Junior Fellowship warm for him. So he'd be setting up house with Hazel, changing her name, branding her and leading her about as his own tame heifer right before my eyes.

For a few hours I seriously considered leaving Oxford—going down there and then, at the end of my second year, and getting a job. But my natural determination came back. I don't like having my plans interfered with. Not even the girl I was " in love " with was going to have that kind of power over me.

All the same, I was in pretty considerable agony. I couldn't give my mind to enjoying life, so I tried to fill in the time by working but, of course, I couldn't give my mind to that either. The days were flowing by without the slightest profit, a thing I can't abide: I'd had enough of that on the deck of that damned destroyer.

Then Fate, with its well-known sense of humour, gave me a throw of the dice. Just one throw . . .

It was a brutally hot day in the second week in June. I'd got up late after a sleepless night, and just about mustered the energy to get into my clothes and shamble out. It was somewhere between midday and one o'clock, and the paving stones were frying. I hadn't a hat, and the sun fairly grilled the back of my neck as I walked slowly up the High. I couldn't decide whether to try and eat some lunch, regarding it as breakfast, or step into a pub and start soaking up beer. If I did, I knew I'd be too inert to snap out of it, so I'd probably drink till about three and then go back to bed, half-seas over and with an empty stomach. Not an attractive thought.

I was wondering, in a bemused way, what I *was* going to do, and how much longer I could walk in this glaring heat without falling down in a fit of sunstroke, when I realised there was a female shape standing right in front of me and I was about to bump into it.

Muttering an apology, I raised my eyes and found myself looking at Hazel.

"Oh," I said. "Er . . . what are you doing here?" As if I'd met her in the Gobi desert.

"Bill's taking a paper," she said.

The heat crashed on my skull, my shirt was pasted to my back, and what with the fatigue, Hazel's nearness, and everything else, I was incapable of forming the simplest ideas. Then it dawned on me. We were standing outside the Examination Schools. Bill was in there, scribbling away for dear life, unloading the knowledge that would bring him a degree, and the degree would bring him a job, and the job would bring him a marriage licence . . .

"Come and have a drink," I said, feebly groping for her arm.

"I'm waiting for Bill. He'll be out in a minute and I'm going to cook him some lunch, to save him having to sit in a stuffy restaurant in this heat."

I looked at my watch. "You're at least fifteen minutes too early," I said. "And after they finish he'll be another five minutes getting out, which gives you twenty minutes to have a five-minute drink with an old admirer."

I leered at her, unleashing a cloud of breath that must have corroded the stonework of the Examination Schools, and at the same time wiped a boiling deposit of sweat off my neck. Prince Charming. And to cap it all, my eyes compulsively dropped to her magnificent bosom and I knew I could have been arrested just for the thoughts that were going through my mind.

She demurred a bit more, but the cool bar-parlour was only a few steps away, and the pavement must have felt uncomfortably hot through her thin shoes. In a couple of minutes we were installed, I with a pint of beer and she with a glass of chilled white wine. I looked at her, averted my eyes because of the pain of her beauty, took a gigantic swig of the beer, turned back to her, and all of a sudden it had happened. I was talking fast, blurting out the whole story of my need for her.

"Look, it's madness," I said. "A girl should never marry the first man she loves. What's going to happen when you grow up and change? No, listen to me, for God's sake. There's just time. You're not married yet. I love you. I know I could make you happy. Look, we understand each other. You're not Bill's type. You're mine."

"That's just it," she said, slipping down from her stool. I reached out and for one shuddering instant my fingers closed round her smooth, shapely wrist. Then it struck me that she'd said something odd.

" What d'you mean, that's just it? " I said.

" I mean it's not a question of whose type I am," she said. " It's more a question of who I can trust. And trust myself with."

" Come back! " I said, loudly, as she made for the door.

" Easy, easy," said the landlord. " It's too hot for a disturbance." He was trying to play it good-temperedly, but I could see from the hard look in his eyes that he was ready to throw me out. And Hazel had gone.

All of a sudden I wanted to stop thinking about her. I drank the rest of my beer and ordered more. The landlord was mollified. We talked about cricket, and I got more voluble as pint after pint went down. But underneath it all, I was aware that the meaning of Hazel's words were spreading across my mind like a stain over a tablecloth.

She, the inwardly untamed, with the wild high cheekbones and the blood of a roamer in her veins, had chosen close-knit, serious-eyed Bill. He was personable and attractive enough to take up her attention, and at the same time help her to keep herself reined in. She knew what was waiting for her if she once sniffed the free wind. A gallop over the edge of a cliff. She didn't trust herself and she was damned right.

I slurred off a few more jokes to the landlord, and then lurched back to my digs and lay down on the bed. How I ever got up again I don't know. Everything felt broken inside me . . .

The next thing that stands out in my memory is being in the Common Room with one or two chums, drinking our way through a few bottles of very good sherry we'd got as a bargain. Term was over, in fact it had been for about ten days, but we'd all stayed up a bit longer because there was a series of dances and parties we didn't want to miss, before everybody dispersed to London or abroad. Eight weeks wasn't enough for all the good times we tried to pack into an Oxford summer. I say " we " because, though I was feeling utterly grim and blank inside, I went along with it. What can you do?

One thing you can't do is drink too much sherry at a time, and we were just thinking of corking up what remained and going out for a meal, when Bill came in. We were all pretty relaxed, so we hailed him jovially—though normally there was a fairly marked gulf between him and a roistering set like us—and poured him out a glass. His face was very set and white.

At first I thought he was just tired, with the strain of doing all that work for his finals, but pretty soon the sherry warmed him up enough to start him talking, and it emerged that he was angry. Really fighting mad. Well, naturally we questioned him a bit—encouraged him to get it off his chest.

" This Fellowship they're giving me," he said—in exactly the tone in which he'd have said, " This wooden half-crown they gave me in my change."

We hadn't known he had been given a Fellowship, so a few vague noises of congratulation and we-knew-you-had-it-in-you rose into the air, and the bottle of "Tio Pepe" was poised for another libation.

"You don't understand," he said, looking round hot-eyed. "They've dug up some archaic College regulation and tied the whole thing to their own ungenerosity and lack of imagination."

We looked blank.

"A condition of my election," he said in a voice full of quiet loathing, "is that I reside. Live in."

"Is that what's annoying you?" someone asked. "What's wrong with having a free place to live and free dinners?"

"What's wrong with it is that I want to get married," Bill said. "I told them that and they nodded indulgently, as if they were prepared to make allowances for a piece of adolescent folly. So I said it again, and this time they turned nasty. God! It was all so *predictable*!" He slammed his empty sherry glass down, almost hard enough to break it. "I looked from one face to another and there was no support anywhere. If they were married they just avoided my eyes and pretended to be thinking about something else. And if they were rooted old bachelors they looked at me with a kind of sneering triumph. Watkins and Furlow were the two most offensive, as you might imagine."

At this point somebody interrupted with what purported to be a piece of gossip about this character Furlow. Talk and laughter started up again, and the conversation was steered away from Bill's troubles. Everybody stood up and started drifting to the door, sorting out jackets, hats, et cetera. But I couldn't leave it like that. I moved over to Bill and said, just for his ear, "What's going to happen, then?"

"Happen?" he said, looking up at me as if he'd already forgotten talking to us.

"Are they going to stop you getting married?" I asked. I *had* to know.

"Listen," he said, sitting up straight. "Nothing is going to stop me from marrying Hazel. If they can appeal to regulations, so can I. Academic celibacy has been dead for a century. They can force me to have a room in College, and they can force me to be there between midnight and eight in the morning—in termtime. That's the limit of what they can do."

"But why don't they give in, if you're so determined," I asked.

He shrugged. "Every college has to have a statutory number of bachelor Fellows living within the walls."

"To put the drunks to bed?" I suggested.

"That's about it. So of course they twist the arm of every young man they elect. Probably if they'd known I was going to get married they'd have passed me over for the job. But I'm damned if I'll give up my chosen career just because I've also chosen a wife."

I clapped him on the shoulder, oozing with false bonhomie. "That's right, teach the old crabs a lesson," I said. Or something like that. And I hurried out, because suddenly I couldn't stand being with Bill any longer—couldn't stand looking at him or hearing his voice.

I spent most of the next three months in Amsterdam, living it up like mad. I told my people I was at a reading party in a windmill, beside a quiet canal some miles out of the city. When I got home, just a few days before it was time for the Oxford term to begin, they were concerned because I'd lost weight. My eyes were positively popping out of my fleshless face, and I was as jumpy as a cat.

They took me seriously to task for working too hard, so I solemnly promised I wouldn't do it any more. And off I went to Oxford for my last year, thankful at least that I'd filled in the time without too much moping over Hazel. But the energy I'd had to expend in keeping the thought of her at bay; the drink I'd had to consume, the night-club proprietors I'd had to enrich, the women I'd had to chase! And at the end of it all, Hazel came bouncing back into my mind like something on the end of a piece of elastic. As soon as the train steamed in past the cemetery and came grinding into Oxford station, there she was in my brain, my blood, my bones, coming between me and everything else I wanted to enjoy. Only now I had to think of her as Mrs. Bill Gerard.

Still, I kept up the heroic effort. For a whole month I packed my days and nights with meaningless things—meeting people, going to parties, even working. Sometimes, for stretches of eight or nine hours at a time, I forgot about Hazel altogether. I saw the pair of them in the street, now and then, but I always managed to duck down a side turning and keep from having to confront them and smile, and pass the time of day.

The Oxford summer, which was still hanging about in odd wisps at the beginning of October, lost its magic and disappeared; and the crisp mornings and early evenings came in, making one feel brisk and businesslike. I was almost on the point of telling myself that the nonsense was out of my system, that I'd sweated it away and was cured.

And then, one pouring wet night in early December, it happened.

I was walking home from a party, wet through and in a king-size bad temper. I'd just been forced to get rid of my car; the Proctors had withdrawn their permission to keep one in Oxford, owing to some fool misunderstanding with a policeman, and though I was tempted to chance it—just put it in a fresh garage and trust to luck that I'd never be stopped and questioned—I decided against crowding my luck. I didn't want them to start investigating me, or one or two things could easily have come to light which would have forced them to send me down, and I should have regarded that as a defeat on points.

So there I was, walking home through this soft, drenching rain. Midnight was beginning to chime out from various clocks—it would take about ten minutes for the whole lot to give their individual votes on the matter—and the party had broken up because most of the guests were the law-abiding type who hadn't been able to beat the regulations and find themselves accommodation in places where they weren't persecuted with silly little rules, like having to be in at midnight. I had—which was one of the reasons why I didn't want the Progs investigating me. But I was fed up: with the rain, with the law-abiding little people, with the dreary party that had ended too soon.

The clocks bonged out, the rain splashed down, and the streets were empty except for a few hurrying figures. A city of the dead. I began to think longingly of a warm, dry bed, however lonely. Then I noticed two figures standing still, a little way ahead of me. I slowed down as I approached them. Something about them told me they were people I knew.

Of course. And I stopped in my tracks . . . But why were Bill and Hazel standing by a wet wall, at midnight, talking in low voices? They were married: why weren't they at home in bed, or drinking cocoa by the last glowing embers?

Then I remembered. Bill had to report at College every night at twelve, and stay there till eight before he could come home to breakfast. And they had been married about three months—the torture of it! I saw the whole thing in a flash: how they would go to bed together at, say, nine o'clock: how, at eleven-thirty, just when that deep, contented sleep ought to have been setting in, Bill would have to get up and start climbing into his trousers. And leaving Hazel there!

He must have wanted that job very badly, I thought, not to have put two fingers up to the College long ago, and stayed with his wedded wife till the cocks crew his Fellowship into thin air. Still, each to his taste. But why was she here with him?

I stepped aside, into deep shadow. The splashing rain overlaid the sound of footsteps, and I knew they were unaware of me. I tried to hear what they were saying, but I wasn't quite near enough. Their attitudes told me they were arguing some point with a good deal of passion. She kept hanging on to his arm, and doing most of the talking; he was looking down at the ground, as if in mental conflict.

Finally he looked up at her, and said something that was evidently meant to be decisive and was decisive, because she broke away from him, turned, and began to walk off rapidly. When she'd gone about ten yards, she stopped, and threw him just one glance, but it didn't alter his decision. As I watched, he took out a key, opened a door in the wall, and went in. The door closed . . . suddenly there was nothing in the world except the rain falling in the street, the last chimes of midnight, the heavy wet stones of the wall, and Hazel's tall figure hurrying away.

I came out of my patch of shadow. I don't think any ideas had, at that stage, formed in my head. I was just drawn towards Hazel by the sheer pull of my desire for her. When she turned and looked back at Bill, I had seen her face. I can't describe it. I can only say that if she, or any girl with half her attractive power, had looked at me like that, with so much tenderness, so much need, and so much brave defiance that wasn't fooling anyone, I'd have dynamited the College rather than go through the door in the wall and shut it between us.

I quickened my pace so as not to lose her in the quiet streets we were approaching. I don't believe I had any thought except just to follow her until she got home, to keep my eyes on her until the last possible moment. You don't reason or plan at a time like that. I walked fast, fast, but even so I only just kept up with her swinging stride. She's magnificent, I found myself thinking. The words formed themselves over and over in my mind as if on a ticker-tape that had gone out of control. She's magnificent. She's magnificent.

Leaning forward into the rain, walking so fast I was almost running, I gained a little at a time until I was just behind her. I thought she must surely have heard my footsteps, but she never slackened her pace or turned round, and in my excitement I was almost breathing down her neck when suddenly she stopped at a garden gate, unlatched it quickly and swung it open. Then she saw me; and there we were, facing each other with the gate between us.

Her face was wet, and for a moment I thought it was just the rain. Then I saw that her eyes were brimming. But her voice was quite steady when she spoke.

"What are you doing?" she asked me.

"Coming in to see you."

"You mustn't," she said. "Bill isn't here."

"I know where Bill is," I said.

Hazel made a small, tense movement that was halfway to a shrug. Then she turned and walked up the garden path, leaving me holding the gate. I went inside, shut it behind me and followed her.

She opened the front door and I was right behind her. When it closed, the two of us were inside. She simply went on up the stairs as if I weren't there. They had the top flat. Once we got inside she went straight into the bedroom and switched on the light.

I followed. The gasfire was on, roaring away to itself. And there, in the centre of the room, was the bed Bill had climbed out of in the interests of his scholarly career.

Hazel stood for a few seconds looking at me. Her eyes were still full of tears. I could feel the hard emptiness inside her. All that full bowl of love and emotion had been spilt on the ground, and there was, for the moment, nothing for anybody. Or anything

for everybody, depending on how you cared to put it. Same thing, really.

My wet hair clung to my skull; my whole body was burning. Hazel looked at me with those tear-wet, empty eyes, as if I were a piece of furniture. And, in her world at that moment, that's no doubt what I was. In fact, the next thing she did proved it. She turned away from me and began to undress, laying her clothes across a chair, exactly as if she were alone.

As for me, I just stood there. I knew what I was going to do, but beyond that I had no thoughts and no identity. I wasn't James Richards. I was just an event that was about to happen to Hazel.

Everything came off, and then Hazel walked straight past me to the light switch. Click. There we were, in the rosy half-dark. Then she padded over to the gasfire and put it out too. The red glow faded quickly, and as it faded I heard the bed creak. The dutiful wife, having walked with her husband as far as the little door in the College wall, had come back to their top-floor flat, turned off the light and the gas, and got into bed.

And if there was an uninvited presence there too, if the bed creaked a second time, was that her fault?

So much for my memories. But that was then and today was now. As we ran into the suburbs of Oxford, I began to feel horribly nervous, much more than I'd ever expected. All of a sudden I didn't want to see Bill, and even more strongly I didn't want to see Hazel. The car felt like a prison: it was so heavy, so smooth, so fate-like in the way it rolled along, carrying me towards Bill's house like a laboratory animal being shipped without malice to the place where it will be tormented. I hated the cool, impersonal neck and shoulders of Evans. The perfect chauffeur. All he did was drive the car, efficiently and without any feelings. He should have been a concentration camp Kommandant.

My tension rose towards a momentary peak, then sank back. My heart slowed down to a normal beat. Twenty years is twenty years. Hazel and Bill would be different people. And I? Oh, I was a different person. I had more money, for one thing, and that changes you. If you don't believe me, that's probably because you don't know anybody well who used to be poor and is now rich.

I got Evans to drop me at the end of their road, and told him to get lost and come back at six o'clock. That would give me time to get home for an eight o'clock dinner. The day was mapped out, controlled, safe. No matter what happened at Bill's, it would end at six o'clock and a normal Sunday would close in again. Peace. I breathed easily as I found the house and went up to the front door.

A beaten-up garden with a swing. Kids. But the swing was old, and the grass under it wasn't worn away. So the youngest kid was too old to bother with the swing. Jim Sherlock Richards.

I rang the bell.

A girl of about thirteen opened the door. She asked me if I were Mr. Richards, and I said yes. All ready for me. No doubt the girl had listened to conversations at meals in which Bill and Hazel talked about old times. James Richards? I can hardly recall his face. Was he a friend of yours? Not really—just up at the same time. Very true. I followed the girl into the living-room and waited.

Not for long, though. One quick glance round the room—good, shabby furniture, lots of books, one high-quality reproduction and a dim daub that looked like an original—and all at once Hazel was coming in through the french windows, pulling off gardening gloves, and Bill was entering through the door, both at once. So that I only had time to take one quick look at her before I turned to face him. All very confusing.

What that first glimpse showed me was that time had thickened her figure but didn't seem to have made much difference to her face. It still had good skin and youthful outlines. A face-lift? No, not in a town like Oxford where they all saw each other every two or three days. And not on his income, either. No frills. She was holding a bunch of roses: must have been cutting them in the garden while waiting for me. The gardening-gloves lent a delightfully informal touch. Altogether it was quite an entrance, though Bill spoilt it a bit by making his at the same time.

Bill seemed longer and thinner. His tightly-massed hair had a tinge of grey. Apart from that, twenty years had done nothing to him except deepen the lines of thoughtfulness that had already, when I knew him, begun to spread across his face. Or was that all? I looked at him again more carefully, as he looked away from me at Hazel. Weren't his eyes different somehow? More inward-looking than ever? Gazing in not merely at his thoughts, but at something else, something he was keeping hidden or perhaps protecting?

Then we were chattering and taking glasses in our hands, and I came back to earth. For the first ten minutes we were all so defensive, so carefully probing, that nobody learnt anything.

Bill had forgotten me altogether; that much was clear. He was engaged in getting to know me from scratch, very cautiously so as not to put a foot wrong, with the object of caning me up for a big subscription to his African tomfoolery.

I, for my part, was stonewalling and keeping my eyes open. I kept trying to absorb details about Hazel, but Bill was talking earnestly about African education, and the strain of appearing to concentrate while actually thinking about his wife proved so great that I decided it would be easier just to concentrate. So I did. I let him hammer away for about ten more minutes, and then the daughter, who seemed to be acting as parlourmaid, showed in another visitor. Evidently we were to be four at lunch.

The new arrival was called Paul something-or-other and they

all seemed to be on pretty cosy terms. Paul was a colleague of Bill's, also in the Plato-and-Aristotle business. But a very contrasting type. He was strongly built, with a bull-neck, and a domed forehead that looked like a battering-ram. It gave the impression of having a tremendous thickness of skull beneath it, so that I had a vision of him putting his head down and charging like a rhinoceros, and going straight through the wall of a house, the occupants scattering in panic. His voice was a shock, though. It was weak and soft, not at all the voice that ought to be coming from that big chest. I decided he must have had some kind of disease that had affected his larnyx.

"Is Bill lecturing you about Africa?" he asked me, sitting down comfortably with his glass in his hand. "Don't tell me. It's a safe bet that he is."

"I suppose I am a bore about it," said Bill, looking eager and worried at the same time.

"Don't apologise," Paul said. "We're dons, we're expected to be boring. We're not expected to be able to talk about anything but our own concerns when we meet visitors from the great world outside. Isn't that so?" he appealed to me.

"You said it, I didn't," I fended him off. "As it happens, Bill's African ideas don't bore me. I came down to hear him talk about them."

"Well, don't let me stop you," Paul said. He turned to Hazel and included her in his smile, which was bright and mechanical. "I'm here for Hazel's cooking, but I promise not to interrupt."

Did I imagine it? Or did some kind of signal, a brief flash too quick for the eye to follow, jump between the two of them? "I'm here for Hazel's cooking." Did my inner ear detect a layer of meaning, thin as onion skin, behind the words? Here for Hazel's what?

I turned back to Bill and he began to chew my ear off again. Africa this, Africa that. After a while Hazel got up and went over to the sideboard to get more drinks. She collected our glasses, recharged them, brought them back, and also fidgeted with some little bowls of nuts and olives and so forth. As she moved about, against the steady background of Bill's voice, I watched her: not so much with my eyes, as with those antennae a man uses to keep contact with a woman who's moving about within a few feet of him. I felt, rather than saw, what she was doing: how she bent over, straightened, paused here and rustled rapidly there. And all of a sudden I twigged it. Don't tell me I'm wrong. I never made a mistake yet.

She was playing around with this Paul.

How did I know? It's hard to put into words. Adultery has a kind of supersonic whine, too high for your ears to pick up unless you've done something to attune them. Well, I'd done a fair amount to attune mine. There was my past history with Hazel. Plus one or two other episodes in between. Nothing to

do with this story: but I hear the note sooner than most, when it's sounded.

Bill had stopped talking for a moment. He was waiting for me to say something. And I had nothing to say, because it would have been hopeless to try to make him see how misguided all this African do-gooding was. I was going to have to keep my opinions to myself, and even simulate a polite, constructive interest. That meant choosing my words with great care, or he'd be trying to tie me down to all sorts of definite obligations.

And all the time I was conscious of Paul and Hazel, darting glances at one another over the rims of their sherry glasses. At one point she handed him the dish of olives, and I watched like mad to see if he allowed his hand to brush against hers as he took one. That's usually the mark of people who are having an affair—the compulsion to touch one another. But he was clever, this Paul. *It wasn't his first time. He looked just the kind of skilful cad who never gets caught out.*

And Hazel? What did she look like? I was trying to decide, and at the same time halting through a few sentences to keep Bill at arm's length, when fortunately there was a diversion. The thirteen-year-old girl came in, bringing a younger sister with her, aged about eleven. There was a certain amount of small talk, plus an argument about whether the son was expected to lunch or not. He was evidently the eldest, about nineteen and an undergraduate at his father's College. He was supposed to come home to lunch every Sunday, but he pleased himself and stayed away if it suited him. As they wrangled about whether he had or hadn't said he was coming, I was thinking about his age. Nineteen. Hazel must have conceived him in the very year when I last saw them. Perhaps, since all things are possible, it was even . . . I dismissed the thought at once. No need to add another tangle to the situation.

They finally decided that the son wasn't coming, which relieved me considerably, and we all went in to lunch. Not having any domestic help, Hazel and the girls shared the job of fetching the food in from the kitchen and dishing it up. For a few minutes it was all coming and going, clattering dishes, arguing over where this was and where that was, while Bill and Paul and I stood waiting to take our seats at the table.

It gave me a chance to take Paul in. He was chatting to Bill with elaborate man-to-man casualness, a sort of old-colleagues-together tone under which he was taking out some rather nasty ill-nature. It was obvious that Bill irritated him considerably. I suppose a cuckold is always irritating, particularly so to the man who is putting him in that position.

"Of course, Bill's just marking time," he said to me with a facetious grin that tried to rope me in on his side in the baiting-game. "Another three weeks and he'll be finished with Oxford. Already we're insubstantial, just wraiths, aren't we, Bill?"

"Are you really leaving as soon as that?" I asked.

"I shall be flying out," he answered, "to look round and see what kind of accommodation is available, and meet my African colleagues, and get some idea of the size of the job. I shan't be starting work, though, till late in September. So there'll be time to fly back here and clear everything up at this end."

"Clear everything up?" I said. "You mean sell the house? Are you all going?"

Hazel was putting vegetable dishes on the table, and it seemed to me that she set them down hard and rattled spoons and things unnecessarily, thrusting her presence into our midst as if she didn't want our conversation to go on. I saw, too, a look of quiet misery slide across Bill's face.

"We haven't quite decided yet," he said.

"Will you carve, darling?" Hazel asked him in a brisk, overriding voice. No talking about our family plans in front of strangers, was what she meant. I shot a look at Paul; he had his eyes discreetly lowered. It's a mistake to be too careful: if you take pains not to let anything be seen, anyone can tell you've got something you can't afford to show.

We chewed and swallowed, made meaningless conversation, and watched each other. Hazel's eyes were bright. She seemed to me to be enjoying herself with an inner excitement that came glowing through her skin. Three men at once, even if one of them was only her husband. What was her game? How did she live her life now? I thought of those few minutes we had spent together, the blazing street and the shadowy bar-parlour. *That's just it. It's a question of who I can trust myself with.* Her eyes had that same wild dimension inside them. What lay hidden in the twenty years since I had loved her?

As for Paul, I hated his plump hands. I hated him for her husband's sake, and for my sake, and for her own sake.

The situation was getting out of hand. I longed for six o'clock, but it was only a quarter to two. More than four hours of this! A sense of reckless power came over me. I no longer cared what I did; I only wanted to leave some kind of mark on the situation, something to make them remember the day I visited them. "James was here: he broke this, and this, and that over there."

Paul was needling Bill again. Some rigmarole about teaching philosophy in a hot climate. "Passions run high," he was saying. "Remember Pascal, where he says he only believes histories related by people who are ready to let themselves be torn to pieces?"

"What kind of bunk is that?" I asked him. I could hear my voice being rough and challenging, like one street-corner lout working up a quarrel with another.

"It's in the *Pensées*," he said, giving me a contemptuous glance.

"Very uncharacteristic, though," Bill intervened, trying to

preserve good humour. "Besides, Pascal's attitude to history wasn't the same as his attitude to philosophy."

"Look, I don't know anything about Pascal and I don't want to know," I snarled. "But I can see when somebody's talking in a damned silly, irresponsible way."

Bill looked at me wide-eyed, conveying shock and reproof, but I didn't care. I wanted to tread on this Paul with his soft, mocking voice and his thick neck. I was never going to see any of them again, so what did it matter? If I can't give you any money for your Africans, Bill, I thought, I can at least insult the man who's battening on your sexual life. Thrusting in between you, and Hazel, and my ghost.

"You certainly believe in plain speaking, don't you?" Paul said, leaning forward and looking at me with aggression in his eyes and mouth.

"I believe in ordinary common decency," I said. "If I couldn't stop myself from mocking at a man's ideals I wouldn't come and eat at his table."

At this, Hazel got up abruptly, pushed her chair back with a loud scrape, and left the room, beckoning the daughters with her. And they went, too. It was her way, I suppose, of trying to bulldoze the quarrel to a standstill before it went any further. But I wasn't going to let go until I had taught our fine friend a lesson.

"Nobody's mocking any ideals," he came back at me in his reedy voice. "It's just that you're out of touch with the academic idiom. Irony always is misunderstood by . . ." he shrugged.

"By peasants like me?" I said. "All right, don't spare me your Oxford complacency."

Bill was still struggling to react to this situation which, to him, must have seemed to blow up from nowhere. He couldn't have seen how much Paul and I would dislike each other.

"Please, both of you," he said helplessly. We turned and looked at him, but all he could say was, "Please," again.

"Don't interrupt us, Bill," I said. "We're quarrelling."

"I don't know why," he said. "It's a bit hard on me, as your host . . ."

"I'm finding it rather interesting, to tell you the truth," said Paul. "I have so little contact with the great world of business and practical affairs." He brought out the words with a thick, fat sneer. "After spending my whole adult life in an atmosphere of free discussion, with give-and-take among everybody, I'd forgotten how tycoons exercise their power—tongue-lashing and bullying anyone whose tone they don't like."

"You've got me wrong," I told him seriously. "Any decent person would react like me, tycoon or not. If you've spent your life among people who never defend their friends when they're insulted, you may call that equality and give-and-take, but I call it spinelessness."

He was pale with anger, but the old ironic detachment didn't

slip for a moment. "That's how the exercise of intelligence always does strike the outsider," he came back. "You think I'm insulting Bill because I make jokes with a sceptical tinge about his—"

"That's right. It's the tinge I don't like. I don't go by your rule-book, that says a tinge is only to be answered by another tinge, till the whole thing dies away in a kind of sunset of tinges." I was surprised at how well, and how much, I was talking. Adrenalin had stimulated me. "I don't think you should accept Bill's hospitality if the only thing you contribute is a permanent cold sneer."

Paul got up and said, "I'll go now, Bill. There's no point in prolonging this. Your friend doesn't like me and the situation could only develop in a way I'd be sorry for."

I said, "If that's a veiled threat to punch my head, come outside and punch it."

"James! For God's sake!" said Bill sharply. "What's come over you?"

I could see he was puzzled, sad, angry, and very much regretting that he'd ever asked me to his house. So after Paul had walked out, which he did silently and quickly, I made him a little speech.

"Look, Bill," I said. "I've been guilty of a loss of self-control —I admit it and I apologise for it. I didn't like Paul, and in particular I didn't like the way he seemed to be laughing behind his hand at you and your ideas. All right, tell me I don't understand donnish ways, tell me I'm coarse and imperceptive. But don't let it spoil our day. I haven't seen you for all these years and I'm here to learn all about your plans and hopes over this African business. When I've gone, you can go and see Paul and make any excuses you like. Tell him you didn't know I'd degenerated into such a brute. Tell him anything. Only let's go and sit in the garden, in the sun, and talk about Africa."

Just at that moment, Hazel came back in. She was looking proud and challenging; not angry, exactly, but very ready to face anybody down.

"Paul's gone, I see," she said.

"Don't wrap it up, Hazel," I said. "I insulted Paul and picked a quarrel with him and that's why he left. I've just been mollifying Bill—at least," I said, turning to him, "I hope I have."

Bill smiled to show that he accepted my conciliatory efforts, but Hazel looked at me stonily and said, "All right, I won't wrap it up. Why did you do it?"

"I didn't like his attitude to Bill."

"How do you know what his attitude to Bill is?"

Instead of answering, I threw her a searching look. She was standing behind Bill, where he couldn't see her face, and for an instant she looked me right in the eyes with a most curious expression. Half provocative and half conspiratorial. Very much as if to say, Go ahead, quarrel with me, interfere with my private

concerns, and we'll see who comes off best—I'll probably enjoy it.

Bill and I went outside, and in the excitement of telling me all about Africa he soon forgot the fracas with Paul. He had the gift of being able to concentrate on a topic, pour his energies into it, and at the same time blot out all annoyances and problems on the fringe of his life. I admire that gift. It's probably the one indispensable condition for getting anything done. Because whose life isn't in a mess? In one way or another?

And certainly Bill's was. I watched him, and sized up the situation, as he droned on. There was a flushed eagerness in his face when he talked about his work in Africa, a kind of nervous enthusiasm that doesn't suit a man of forty-odd. Come to that, he wouldn't have had it in the days when I'd known him before. He was more self-contained then. This excitement was stirred up by some inner need. And I knew what need. He was running away from Oxford, from the life he had lived there for twenty years. And that meant only one thing. Hazel had somehow managed to kill his love for her. He was channelling everything into this idealistic hare-brained scheme because it offered an escape from her. He had been hurt badly, and he was wild to get away before she hurt him any more.

As I reached this conclusion, Hazel was at my side with a tray. Tea in the garden. All very idyllic. And I noticed once again that she grouped herself outside Bill's field of vision.

"Are you looking forward to Africa, Hazel?" I asked.

She looked up quizzically, as if I couldn't really be as stupid as the question made me sound, and Bill answered for her.

"I'm afraid it's all in the balance still. I mean, Hazel's never been to Africa, and before we take the step of transferring the whole household there, she's going to come and look round for a bit."

"There are the children to think of," Hazel added, but I didn't have to be very clever to understand that she wasn't bothering about the children so much as looking forward to getting Bill off her hands for a few years, while she was still young enough to cut a swath among the Pauls of this world.

So to test her I said, "It'll be lonely for you, living in this house by yourself, if you don't go with Bill."

"Oh, I can fly home for a goodish part of each vac.," Bill put in. As he spoke I was watching Hazel. She shot him a sidelong glance that told me all I wanted to know, then looked up at me.

"I expect I'll manage," she said. "Somehow."

After that, I had the whole picture. Bill and I sat back in our deck chairs for another round of African facts and figures, and I fobbed him off every time he brought the subject round to the amount he could expect from my firm. The son came lounging round the side of the house—he looked sufficiently like Bill to advertise a no-accident conception, but apart from that he was

just a typical modern undergraduate, narrow jeans, wide haircut and dirt. We were introduced, and he slouched off again.

Then, somehow, it was nearly six and I was getting ready to go. I knew Evans would have the car gliding to a standstill outside the gate at precisely eighteen hundred hours. I had to go, that was all there was to it, and my curiosity about Bill and Hazel would just have to feed on what I'd managed to pick up. All I knew was that it had gone wrong. Marriage to him hadn't done what she had counted on it to do for her. It hadn't held her steady. She'd gone wild at some stage and stayed wild. But what stage? Early or late? Who had first cut the rope that held her to him?

"Well, I must get ready to go," I said to Bill. I heaped the usual thanks and compliments, and looked round for my hat. He called Hazel out and the two of them stood looking at me.

"I'll write to you," I said to Bill, "as soon as I've had a chance to discuss this with my fellow directors." I hoped the insincerity in my voice wasn't coming through as strongly to him as it was to me. The eleven-year-old came to the french window and said my car was here. I held out my hand to Bill: good-bye to the whole thing. One more unsolved mystery, anchored to a memory. But Hazel was saying something.

"I promised to call in and see Moira. Perhaps James wouldn't mind dropping me off. It's not far from Carfax."

James didn't have any choice in the matter. In a couple of minutes, we were bowling off, all by ourselves in a big, cushiony car. I felt very conscious of Evans' correct neck and ears. I've always refused to have one of those with a glass panel isolating the driver, but now I regretted it.

"Why did you come, James?" she asked me, straight away, as soon as we started moving.

"To see you," I said.

"Why? Just curiosity?"

I nodded. "If that's what you want me to say, I'll say it."

She made an impatient gesture. "Don't be cautious. I won't have it."

"Well," I said, "I'm not going to be incautious. We're not alone, for one thing." I kept my voice down and hoped Evans' hearing wasn't as sharp as I was afraid it probably was.

She leaned back and looked away from me as she said, "You didn't like Paul, did you?"

"Not much."

"Could you say why?"

"I was jealous," I said.

She turned and looked at me now. "You could see, then?"

"Anybody could."

"Bill doesn't," she said quickly.

The car halted at a red light, throbbed, started again.

"I expect Bill would rather not see," I said. "But it isn't any business of mine."

We went round a corner, and her body swayed against mine. To steady herself, she put her hand on my knee. And to unsteady me, she left it there a moment or two longer. Before she took it away she lifted those big, tawny eyes to mine, and I saw that they were still the eyes of a girl.

"It is, James," she said.

"It is what?"

"Business of yours."

What was she telling me? That I'd knocked a hole in the sea-wall and after that the waters had gone on flooding in, from that day to this? Was I the assassin of Bill's happiness?

"When did it go wrong, Hazel?" I asked. "Between you and Bill?"

She looked at me steadily. "You were there," she said.

I wiped sweat off my face. A man doesn't like to feel that his innocent pleasures have given somebody twenty years of trouble, with at least twenty more in store. Bill was right: Africa was the answer.

"Well, here's where I'm going," she said, pointing to a side street. I leaned forward and asked Evans to stop.

"The end of the road will do," she said. "I'll walk down."

The car slid to a halt, and Evans got out to open the door for Hazel. I calculated we had about five seconds in which we would be out of earshot.

"Listen, Hazel," I said. "When Bill goes to Africa, you know where to find me." I felt hot and reckless. After all these years I was as fast in the situation as ever.

"I'll be closing this place up," she said, "and getting a flat in town. The girls will be away from home, anyway."

So that was fixed. Then Evans opened the door.

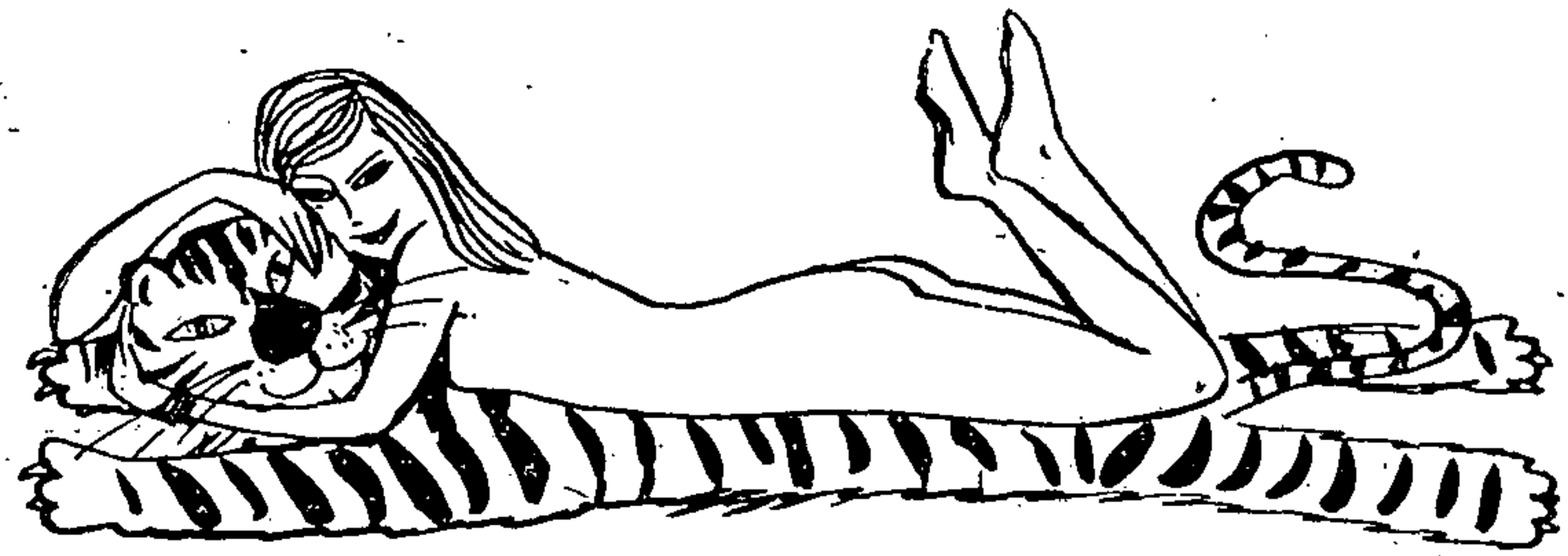
"Well, good-bye," I said.

She smiled in at me briefly, straightened her back, and walked off to her phoney social call, without looking behind.

What happened next? Nothing, yet. It's still to come. All that was six months ago, and the other day I had a note from Hazel giving me her London address. I'll be looking her up. I mean, I'm married, but not as married as all that. But first, I sent Bill a fat contribution to his African fund. I mean a really fat one, that I had to bulldoze through against the resistance of everyone else in the firm. It's enough to underwrite a whole department of his scheme, and in fact he's written back to say that he's putting my name to it. The James Richards Scholarship.

I feel rather good about that, on the whole. I mean, I realise that to teach these chaps a lot of elaborate skills is pure economic hara-kiri. But then hara-kiri is a very dignified business. And it pleases me to think that, in her own way, Hazel has been a help to Bill in his work. After all, that's how it should be.

© John Wain 1964



You meet such interesting people!

Sixth Duke

He seemed little less in his conduct than if vested with regal honours. His servants obeyed by signs. The country roads were cleared, that he might pass without obstruction or observation. His second Duchess was Charlotte, daughter of Daniel, Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham. He made a vast distinction between a Percy and a Finch. The Duchess once familiarly tapped him on the shoulder with her fan; he turned round, and, with an indignant, sour countenance, said, "My first Duchess was a Percy, and she never dared to take such a liberty." His children obeyed his mandates with profound respect. The two youngest daughters had used to stand alternately whilst he slept of an afternoon; Lady Charlotte, being tired, sat down; the Duke awaked, and being displeased, declared he would make her remember her want of decorum. By his will, he left her twenty thousand pounds less than her sister.

Charles Seymour, Sixth Duke of Somerset
J. BERNARD BURKE, *Anecdotes of the Aristocracy*

Christine . . .

She came into court wearing an odd sort of mustard-coloured cloak, shaped like a small tent, which reached to within a few inches of her skirt, which was made of the same material. It was the sort of dress that aims at being chic and looks rather vulgar. This was the first thing I noticed. The second was how small she was. In her photographs she had seemed quite tall, but in effect, and despite the tarty high-heeled shoes, she was tiny, a real little doll of a girl, and here of course was half the attraction. She walked superbly on long slender legs, her

carriage was remarkable; one was struck too, by the mass of copper hair that reached to her shoulders, and framed within it, the small oval face with the high cheekbones and hint of Red Indian blood. She was in short like an animal, and one could see at once her appeal to the animal instincts of men.

It was a terrifying little face, vacant yet knowing, and it belonged not to a girl of twenty-one but to an already ageing woman . . .

and Mandy

Unlike Christine, who photographed better than she looked, Mandy Rice-Davies looked much better than her photographs. She was still only eighteen and had not yet lost, as Christine had, the bloom of youth. It was a hard, cat-like face but a very pretty one. After two years as Rachman's mistress she still looked fresh as a milkmaid, and that was quite a feat. Astride her golden head sat a little rose-petalled hat, such as debutantes wear at garden parties. Her shoes, unlike Christine's were quite lady-like. Her simple grey sleeveless dress accentuated the impression of modesty—until one looked at it closely. Then one saw that the slit down the front was only held together by a loose knot at the middle. When she walked one could see quite a long way up her leg . . .

LUDOVIC KENNEDY, *The Trial of Stephen Ward*

Modest Mary

Miss Mary Blandy, aged twenty-six, fell in love with Captain William Henry Cranstoun, a forty-six-year-old Scotsman who had deserted his wife and children. Mary's father, a wealthy lawyer of Henley-upon-Thames, raised objections natural under the circumstances and made his dislike of Captain Cranstoun plainly evident to that gentleman. Forbidden the house, the fortune-hunting suitor supplied Mary with a powder to be placed in her father's food. It would, he explained, create love and esteem for himself. Instead, the powder killed Mr. Blandy, and Mary was arrested for murder. While Captain Cranstoun escaped to France, Mary was brought to trial wildly protesting her innocence, a protest one is inclined to believe. She was hanged in 1752 still swearing that she had thought she was giving her father a love powder. Modesty and decorum did not forsake her at the end. As she mounted the scaffold she turned to the executioners and said, "Gentlemen, don't hang me high, for the sake of decency."

EDWARD S. GIFFORD, *The Charms of Love*

Doctor

At ten o'clock the door of the double room opened softly. A very tall thin figure was silhouetted against the lighted corridor. It was a man. He must have been six feet six tall. He stood on the threshold with his arms folded, listening. Satisfied, he moved slowly into the room and up to the bed. He knew the way exactly. He bent down and listened to the quiet breathing of the girl. After a moment he reached up to his chest and pressed a switch. A flashlight with a very broad diffused beam came on. The flashlight was attached to him by a belt that held it above the breast bone. He bent forward so that the soft light shone on the girl's face.

The intruder examined the girl's face for several minutes. One of his hands came up and took the sheet at her chin and softly drew the sheet down to the end of the bed. The hand that drew down the sheet was not a hand. It was a pair of articulated steel pincers at the end of a metal stalk that disappeared into a black silk sleeve. It was a mechanical hand.

The man gazed for a long time at the naked body, moving his chest to and fro so that every corner of the body came under the light. Then the claw came out again and delicately lifted a corner of the sheet from the bottom of the bed and drew it back over the girl. The man stood for another moment gazing down at the sleeping face, then he switched off the torch on his chest and moved quietly away . . .

IAN FLEMING, *Dr. No*

Patient Wife

Godeleva, who lived her short life about 1070, was married at the age of eighteen to a nobleman who treated her with the utmost brutality. She however bore this with meekness and patience until finally her husband decided to get rid of her.

She was tricked into entering a dark garden at night where two of her husband's servants seized her and held her head down in a pond until she died, making doubly sure by strangling her with a scarf.

Since then the waters of her well are drunk as a certain cure for sore throats . . .

told in The Book of Saints

Friend of Royalty

I am his Highness' dog at Kew;
Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?

Engraved on the collar of the dog given by Alexander Pope to H.R.H., Frederick, Prince of Wales

She said, "You won't be able to save me"

COMFORT FROM CAPRICORN

BY ELIZABETH LEMARCHAND

MY COUSIN, Hester Winton, had asked me to supper at her house in St. John's Wood. We were in her sitting-room. It had distinction, but I always felt it lacked warmth. There was too much empty space and chilly ornamental glass. The house was one for an income-bracket well above my own, and I assumed that she had considerable private means over and above her salary as an archivist.

We did not know each other well. Some years earlier we had fortuitously shared a table in a restaurant, and by one of life's improbable coincidences discovered that we were distant cousins. She invited me to her house, and seemed to want to maintain contact, although we moved in quite different circles. We met at intervals, and occasionally went to a theatre together. She was uncommunicative about herself, and curiously impersonal in spite of her charm and open-handedness. All the same she was pleasant company, and talked with conviction about the documents she handled in her work. This always seemed to make my own secretarial job, good though it was, feel a humdrum affair.

In retrospect I see that I had an inferiority complex where Hester was concerned. Because of it, this particular invitation had been very welcome, as for once the boot really did seem to be on the other leg. It had just been arranged that I was to accompany our deputy Chairman on a six-months' visit to Australia and New Zealand, in connection with the new branches that the firm was opening up there. But my exciting news had somehow fallen flat. I got the impression that Hester was disconcerted, as if my going abroad cut across some plan of her own. It was puzzling.

I studied her as we settled down to coffee and cigarettes. She

was looking very attractive in a long housecoat of sage-green velvet, which set off her clear pallor and sleek dark hair. As always, she was impeccably groomed, and was sitting with her head tilted back against a gold brocade cushion, watching the smoke spiralling upwards. My mind had darted off to the problems of my own wardrobe when she brought it back with a jerk.

"I'm giving up this house in June, Meg."

"Giving up this house?" I echoed stupidly, in astonishment.

"Yes. I've bought a cottage at a place called Wellsford, in Downshire."

"But what about your job?"

"I'm giving that up too, at the same time."

My immediate reaction was to ask what on earth she was going to do with herself, but I lacked the necessary confidence. Instead, I said,"I thought you were so tremendously keen on it?"

"That's really the point," she answered.

There was a pause, during which I stared at her blankly.

"You see, the documents are only the means to an end," she went on. "The end—for me—is finding out what people thought about life. I'm convinced that before the Industrial Revolution people lived much more fully and deeply than we do. They didn't have more experiences than they were capable of assimilating."

"Surely their lives were usually very narrow and restricted?" I objected.

Hester looked at me, and then began to speak with a vehemence that I had never heard from her before.

"Depth isn't synonymous with breadth! It's depth of experience that matters—finding out what things really are and what they mean. It's this modern mobility that makes life so unsatisfactory. We dash about at high speeds, and our unfortunate minds are bombarded day in and day out with impressions on a scale that they can't possibly cope with properly. It's the continual sense of frustration that's so desperate."

"I can't say that I feel it," I said. It was at this point that I first sensed a faint uneasiness.

"No, I don't suppose you do." Hester's objective tone removed any suspicion of contempt from the remark. "I just happen to be one of the people who *are* affected by it. I haven't met others, but I'm certain they exist. As a matter of fact, you're the first person I've ever discussed it with."

"I'm glad you feel you can discuss it with me if it's bothering you," I said rather awkwardly. "Is this why you've decided to go and live in the country?"

"Yes. At least, it's the remote reason. There's an immediate reason connected with the actual place, but I can't tell you about that yet."

"Do you mean," I said, feeling my way, "that you're going down to live in this cottage in order to be—well, more static?"

"Static on the standard of present-day mobility, yes. Mobile within natural limits. I've never ridden a horse and I'm too old to learn now, so it will mean mobile within my walking capacity."

While I was hesitating about which objection to the plan to raise first, I saw her smile.

"To save time—" she said, "the cottage has a telephone and mod. cons., and there is an excellent village shop. Hillsborough, the nearest town, is six miles away, and has a reasonable hotel. I can afford to be a private patient. If I have to be rushed off in an ambulance with appendicitis, well, it's an Act of God, and the experiment must be interrupted."

The more I heard about the plan, the less I liked it. I told Hester so, in more forthright terms than I was accustomed to use to her.

"... It's an absolutely crack-pot idea," I finished up. "You're throwing up a good job where you're doing valuable work. Then you're simply contracting out. Hang it all, I'm not a *do-gooder, but surely one owes something to society?*"

"I've done orthodox academic work for twenty years," she said calmly. "Now I propose to carry out a psychological experiment by an original method. I don't call that contracting out."

"It can't possibly be called an experiment in any scientific sense. You just can't have the same relationship with the countryside as people did hundreds of years ago. What about the mod. cons., and the village shop? It's simply phoney!"

"No, not phoney, Meg." She spoke almost dreamily. "That valley's quite capable of *coming into its own.*"

In spite of the warmth of the room, the words chilled me. It was almost as if I had a presentiment of the time when I should hear them again. But the next moment Hester was speaking to me quite normally.

"I was hoping you might come down in June and help me move in," she said, "but the trip to Australia has put paid to that idea, I'm afraid."

I did not see Hester again before leaving England, but a sudden impulse made me ring her up on my last evening. She was

obviously pleased, and warm in her good wishes. As by tacit consent we avoided controversial topics.

"I hope the move goes well," I said. "You might let me have a line when you've settled in."

"All right, I will," she replied, "and you can reciprocate. You must come down and stay when you get back."

"I'd love to," I said mechanically, glancing at my watch . . .

Australia engulfed me from the moment the plane touched down. We worked hard, and every spare moment was caught up into the warmth and vitality of a hospitality which knew no limits. And then, in Brisbane, Tim Snow asked me to marry him.

We had known each other casually for years. He was on the Head Office staff, and had been sent out in connection with the Australian expansion plans. It was as if we had suddenly seen each other clearly for the first time. He was fifty to my forty, and it was a momentous step for both of us, but we agreed that we had never felt so convinced about anything. After much discussion we finally decided to wait for the wedding until his return in the following January. In the meantime I was to find us a suitable flat in London, furnish it, and move in.

Not surprisingly I forgot all about Hester, and felt conscience-stricken when I surfaced and realised that June was over, and she would have moved by now. I dashed off an air-letter, trying not to give too much prominence to my own affairs. No answer came until we had moved on to New Zealand. She wrote charmingly about my engagement, and quite naturally about the kind of life she had begun to lead.

". . . I made my last bus journey into Hillsborough today. It seemed an occasion, and I stood myself a good lunch at the Crown. Then I came home laden like a Christmas tree with all the household odds and ends that it's so tiresome to order by post. From now on it's where my two feet will carry me. But don't worry: I shan't ask you to trudge out here carrying your suitcase. Old Mr. Spear at the village garage sports a taxi. Ring up as soon as you get back to London."

I didn't, of course; I was immediately snowed under, both at the office and in my private life. The firm gave me an extra week's holiday, but I decided to keep it in hand for flat-hunting later on, and just to take my normal fortnight in early September. Although devoid of relations I have many friends and rationed out the time carefully in order to see as many of them as possible. The complicated jigsaw was almost complete when Hester rang me up.

"Meg Barclay? Hester here."

"Hullo!" I said, feeling guilty and trying to sound breezy. "How nice of you to ring me. How is it going?"

"According to plan. When are you coming down?"

"Well," I said, playing for time, "I've got an awful lot to fit in, as things have turned out. I—"

She broke in—"But Meg, you simply must come! Why, the last thing you said to me was that you'd love to come."

I had a sudden vivid memory of that telephone call consuming precious time on the eve of my departure. It was incredible that the self-sufficient Hester had remembered my exact words. I was resisting the uncomfortable feeling that I really ought to go when she spoke again.

"Are you still there?"

"Yes." Against my will I heard myself saying that I was looking at my diary. "Would the second weekend in September be any good?"

"Excellent. Friday the eleventh, then?"

"I'll write nearer the time," I said hastily as the pips began. Putting down the receiver, I realised that my uneasiness about Hester had returned.

I had no difficulty in finding the village taxi on emerging from Hillsborough station. A spry little man with a shiny, weather-beaten face detached himself from a group of cronies and hurried forward, touching his check cap. I was soon installed beside him. He seemed fully briefed about me, and began inquiring about emigration prospects in Australia on behalf of a nephew. I had some difficulty in bringing the conversation round to Hester.

"A real nice lady, your cousin, miss," he assured me. "But us down to village thinks it's proper lonely for 'er tucked away up Oweton Combe."

"Isn't she in the village?" I asked, disquieted.

"'Er is and 'er isn't, miss. Wellsford be alongside the river as you'll be seeing, an' Oweton Combe runs up into the Down, like. T'ain't far out, Garden Cottage, but 'tis the only one upalong, an' out o' sight an' sound for all it's close."

We were following the river as he spoke. Small and clear, it wandered in great sweeps through a wide valley, brushing the foot of the green downs first one side and then on the other. Cottages began to appear, their gardens brilliant with autumn flowers.

"Is this Wellsford?" I asked.

"That's right, miss. Us turns sharp left into Oweton."

After the turn the narrow road curved, and the combe opened

out before us. It was unexpectedly impressive. The stream which carved it had long since vanished, leaving it dry and silent. Its sides rose steeply, gnawed by the precipitous courses of its former tributaries. The thin white ribbon of the road stretched to disappearing point, where the valley ended in a ridge capped by a dark wood. A few cattle were grazing, and there were some desultory patches of cultivation on the south-facing slope, but the overwhelming impression was of something static and lifeless. I thought that I had seldom seen a more depressing place.

The next moment we drew up at a gate with a board inscribed GARDEN COTTAGE. The small square building faced with flints seemed to have developed protective colouring: it merged so effectively into the landscape that I had not noticed it.

As I got out of the taxi the front door opened and Hester came down the path. My first reaction was that country clothes suited her very well, and that she had changed little. Then I sensed that there was a difference, although it was impossible to pin down. Her complexion was attractively tanned by wind and weather, but she did not, somehow, look really healthy. She welcomed me warmly, and I fancied I could detect a note of relief.

"It's just a two up and two down," she explained, leading me into the cottage, "but I enlarged the kitchen and had a bathroom built over it."

The front door opened straight into the living-room, which looked comfortable and attractive, but was dominated by a large map on one of the walls.

"What on earth have you got there?" I asked, pointing to it.

"Oh, that's my map of the world," she said, in the completely unselfconscious tone of someone making a simple statement of fact.

I turned to stare at her, but she had walked across the room to straighten a curtain. Shaken, I looked at the map. It was made up of sheets of a very large-scale ordnance survey map. A massive stone wall had been drawn in to enclose a rough circle about a foot in diameter, centred on Wellsford.

Returning from the window, Hester slipped her arm into mine. "Come up and see your room," she said. "Then we'll have some tea. I want to hear everything about Tim."

These first few minutes had established the pattern of my visit. We alternated between perfectly normal conversations, and references by Hester to things which she obviously accepted as objective realities, but which to me were pure fantasy. Quite apart from this there were odd things which I did not like at all.

When I unpacked and opened drawers and cupboards to put away my clothes, I noticed that the lining paper had a curious green design on a white ground. I found it on the dressing-table, too, under the glass top. Hugely enlarged, it reappeared in paint on the inside of the bathroom door. I took an irrational dislike to it. The next morning when we went for a walk I identified it: it was a stylised statement of the shape of the valley and its branchings.

The big map had been extensively annotated in Hester's small, neat handwriting to show a host of minor features. On the slope above the cottage there were circles, and the cottage itself was enclosed by a ring of tiny fires, skilfully executed in red ink. The words THE GUARDIAN had been printed beside it. My discovery of this led to the tensest moment of the weekend.

"What a curious name Garden Cottage is for this place," I remarked casually on the Saturday evening after supper.

Hester gave me a sharp look. "It's a corruption of the original name," she said in a low tone, glancing towards the door.

"Which was Guardian Cottage, according to your map?"

She went so white that I started to my feet.

"Are you all right?"

She nodded without speaking.

"I'll get you a glass of water," I said, going out to the kitchen.

When I came back Hester was standing by the open front door.

"Thanks, Meg," she said, taking the glass. "So sorry. It gets very hot in here sometimes. I'm quite all right now that I've had some air."

It crossed my mind that she had some claustrophobic tendency. If so, the steeply enclosed valley might be playing on her nerves, and explain that unpleasant design upstairs. No further mention was made of the name of the cottage, and shortly afterwards we went to bed.

Usually I keep late hours, but on this occasion I fell asleep almost at once. When I woke it was still dark, and I became aware of a sound, not loud but continuous. It resolved itself into low-toned conversation. Over and above it there was the noise of something brushing the ground as it was dragged along. Then there was a thud immediately under the window. I sat up in bed, wondering if it could be village louts fooling about. Just at that moment the clock in the sitting-room below struck three. As I realised the extreme improbability of horseplay at such an hour I was seized with cold terror, and it seemed an eternity before I could get myself in hand.

Creeping out of the room, I listened at Hester's door. She

was breathing rhythmically. Then, screwing up my courage, I tiptoed to my casement window which was half open. With a swift movement I flashed a torch on to the garden. All was as usual, and there was complete silence. I went back to bed, and must have gone to sleep again while trying to persuade myself that it had all been a nightmare . . .

However the reality of the calendar in my bedroom was beyond doubt. It was one of the illustrated kind with a photograph for each month, and I broke off from my packing to flick over the pages. The last one shook me badly. The dates from the seventeenth to the twenty-fifth of December were enclosed by a red line, and at the head of an arrow pointing to the twenty-fifth was printed *Moment of Truth.*

It was this discovery that made me accept—with great reluctance—Hester's pressing invitation to spend Christmas with her. Back in London, I found myself worrying about her constantly, more especially as there seemed no one to whom I could go for advice. We had not a single mutual friend. How I wished that I had told Tim more about her, but it seemed hopeless to get so fantastic a situation across on paper. I wrote that I had found her in a very nervy state, and felt that it would be a charity to go down and spend my last bachelor Christmas with her. He replied that he hoped it wouldn't be too trying, and that in future nervy relations could come and spend Christmas with us. He had already booked a telephone call for Christmas Day.

I had made an arrangement with Hester that we should ring each other up at alternate weekends. As the winter drew on she became more and more cagey, and finally, early in December, she tried to warn me off.

"It won't be much of a Christmas for you, Meg," she said. "As a matter of fact it's going to be a pretty difficult stage of my experiment, and even dangerous perhaps."

"Of course I'm coming," I said firmly. "I don't want Christmas festivities. I'm worn out with getting this flat ready for Tim. A few days in the country is just what I need."

"I'm worried about Tim," she said uneasily.

"About Tim?"

"Yes. I'm sure he wouldn't approve of your getting involved . . ." Her voice trailed off.

"I expect I shall often do things he won't approve of," I said briskly. "When people of our age marry there's got to be a tremendous amount of give and take. Don't forget to order the taxi."

I rang off quickly.

I went down on Christmas Eve. In the cold shadow of a mid-winter afternoon Oweton Combe looked even more lifeless than before. Hester did not come out to the gate. Garrulous old Mr. Spear carried my suitcase up to the door just as she opened it. I greeted her volubly, and sped him on his way with seasonable greetings.

She had deep stains under her eyes and looked exhausted, and I was even more disquieted by her withdrawn state. While her lips were saying the conventional things her attention was clearly elsewhere. As I unpacked, averting my eyes from the hateful green symbols, I decided that I must somehow break through to her. Over tea in the kitchen I suddenly leaned across the table and let my fingers close on her wrist.

"Hester," I said, "I so much want you to come to my wedding. You will, won't you? This experiment of yours has had a fair trial now. It can't go on for ever."

She looked at me quite normally, and I knew that she had understood. "It isn't an experiment any longer, Meg. You see," she glanced at the window, "it's come off completely. The valley's *come into its own again*."

For the fraction of a second I was back in her house in St. John's Wood, and a chilling sensation ran down my spine. Outside there was a sudden muffled thud.

"You heard that," she said, stating a fact.

"Yes," I said loudly, "the cows must be a bit of a nuisance about the place."

Hester did not answer, but got up abruptly and led the way into the sitting-room.

When we were settled in front of the fire I decided to resume the attack. "Don't you think, now I'm here, it would be a good thing to tell me about this danger you're expecting tomorrow?"

"You can't save me if it happens," she said dully, her eyes on the fire, "but *you* are safe. I know that now."

"Why can't I save you, Hester?"

She leaned forward, mouthing the words. "We aren't in the same century. By living here like this I've been drawn back. You can't save me any more than you can save—well, Harold from the arrow at Hastings."

"Save you from what?" I persisted.

"From being burnt if they set fire to the cottage. You heard them just now, didn't you? They've been piling up branches for days. I haven't been able to get out since the seventeenth—that's the first day that the sun stayed behind the Down across the valley. We haven't seen it since. I am the Guardian . . .

If it doesn't rise tomorrow, I have to be the sacrifice."

I was kneeling beside her now, my arm round her shoulders.

"Hester, this is just some old wives' tale! You know the saying 'sure as the sun will rise to-morrow' as well as I do."

"There's no saying like that in my century," she answered. "It's all in that document in the drawer—the one I found when I was working on something else—in the century I used to be in."

Rather to my surprise I could read the document, a torn and stained fragment which seemed to be part of a travel journal. I know very little about these things but should have put it somewhere in the eighteenth century.

. . . Oweton, that is, Olde Towne: They were lothe to speke, but I did pryme an olde man of ye poore sort with ale. He did tell me they did worshippe ye sunne in hethen tymes in Oweton Combe, and for ye nine days of midwinter when he climbeth not above ye Downe, did keepe ye Guardian prysoned in a cell, to burne with ffire, came he not back on . . .

As I stared at the paper, I noticed a smell of burning. Hester made no move, so I went quickly round the cottage. There was nothing to account for the smell, but when I opened my bedroom window it came in strongly. As I thrust my head out—and for the fraction of a second before the moon went behind a cloud—the little garden seemed to be strewn with branches of trees and straw. Then the light returned, and everything was normal again.

Going back to the sitting-room, I tried to clarify my thoughts. No doubt, some places were so impregnated with their past history that certain people could have experiences of an apparently sensory nature connected with it. But surely no physical harm could befall them? Tomorrow the sun would rise and Hester's terror end. For how long, though? For good? Or only for another year? How was I to get her out of this hellish place?

As the evening wore on she sat tense and listening, but did not speak to me. I brought her soup which she drank absently; glancing at the door from time to time. At about five minutes to twelve she began to watch the clock on the mantelpiece.

"It's almost the ninth day now," she said suddenly. "The Guardian has to bring the sun back. I've forgotten how. I must have known once. When will they light the fire?"

"Hester," I said, "I can promise you that the sun will rise tomorrow."

She stared at me.

"I can't see you properly. You're so far away. Hundreds of years. Who are you?"

"I'm Meg, darling," I said imploringly, holding her hand.

The clock made a tiny whirring sound, and the clear, melodious telling out of midnight began. One, two, three, four . . .

The shattering clamour of the telephone bell brought me to my feet with every nerve jangling. I went across to Hester's desk and picked up the receiver.

"Hillsborough 72543?" inquired a voice.

"Yes," I said, my mind a complete blank.

"Will Miss Meg Barclay accept a personal call from Brisbane?"

"Good God!" I exclaimed aloud. "Yes, of course." I realised that Hester was standing beside me, but before I could speak to her the receiver crackled again.

"Hold the line, please, Hillsborough. Your call's coming through."

"Go ahead, Brisbane," said another voice.

"Meg! My dearest! Happy Christmas!"

I had often wondered what Tim's voice would sound like when I heard it again. Now I realised that I had always known.

"Darling!" I said confusedly, "is it really Christmas Day with you?"

"I'll say it is," he answered. "Ninety in the shade already, and the sun blazing down—"

"Tim," I broke in, "would you just tell Hester that? She's here."

"Hey, what's all this?" he demanded. "You sound so het up."

"Please do it, darling. I'm giving her the receiver now. I'll write." Pressing it against Hester's ear, I bent over it to catch every word.

"Tim Snow here, Miss Winton. Meg wants me to tell you that we're well into Christmas Day over here. Temperature ninety in the shade, and the sun blazing down on us."

I caught her as she fainted, and managed to ease her fall into a chair. Then I abandoned her without compunction for the rest of my three minutes with Tim.

While I waited for her to come round I put the document into the fire, and stood watching it curl up and finally disintegrate. Presently she stirred and opened her eyes.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed, looking at the clock. "Why, it's Christmas Day! I must have dropped off to sleep after supper. My poor Meg, why didn't you go up to bed?"

"Tim was going to ring up," I said truthfully. "Didn't you hear the telephone?"

"That must have been what I thought was a cock crowing in

my dream! I had been having nightmares, and suddenly the sun came out and everything was all right."

"Tim says it's sizzling in Brisbane. It's nearly noon there, of course. Their time's about ten hours ahead of ours."

"Isn't it odd? Something to do with the way the world goes round, I think."

She stood up and looked at the room, as if she were seeing it for the first time.

"You know, Meg," she said, turning to me, "you were right about this experiment of mine being phoney. One can't really get back into the mentality of the past. If I can get another London house in time, would you like to be married from it?"

© Elizabeth Lemarchand 19

THE LADY'S-MAID'S SONG

When Adam found his rib was gone
  He cursed and sighed and cried and swore
And looked with cold resentment on
  The creature God had used it for.
All love's delights were quickly spent
  And soon his sorrows multiplied:
He learnt to blame his discontent
  On something stolen from his side.

And so in every age we find
  Each Jack, destroying every Joan,
Divides and conquers womankind
  In vengeance for the missing bone.
By day he spins out quaint conceits
  With gossip, flattery, and song,
And then at night, between the sheets,
  He wrongs the girl to right the wrong.

Though shoulder, bosom, lip, and knee
  Are praised in every kind of art,
Here is Love's true anatomy:
  His rib is gone; he'll have her heart.
So women bear the debt alone
  And live eternally distressed,
For though we throw the dog his bone
  He wants it back with interest.

JOHN HOLLANDER, *A Crackling of Thorns*

A woman will promise anything . . .

LOVE ON A DARK STREET

BY IRWIN SHAW

THE NIGHT is the time for calls across the ocean. Alone in the hours past midnight in a foreign city, a man's thoughts centre on another continent, he remembers loved voices far away, he calculates differences in time zones—*it is eight o'clock in New York, the taxis are bumper to bumper, all the lights are lit*—he promises himself that there will be a general saving on such things as cigarettes, liquor, and restaurants to make up for the sweet extravagance of several moments of conversation across the three thousand miles of space.

In his apartment on the narrow street behind the Boulevard Montparnasse Nicholas Tibbell sat, holding a book in his hand but not reading. He was too restless to sleep, and although he was thirsty and would have liked a beer, he was not resolute enough to go out once more and find a bar that was still open. The apartment, which he had rented from a German photographer for six months, was an ugly, small place, with only two badly furnished rooms, the walls of which were covered by blown-up photographs of emaciated nude women whom the German had posed in what Tibbell considered rather extreme positions.

Tibbell spent as little time and thought on the apartment as possible. At the end of six months, the company for which he worked, a large organisation which dealt in chemicals on both sides of the Atlantic, would decide whether he was to be kept in Paris or sent somewhere else. If his base was to be permanently in Paris, he would have to find more comfortable quarters for himself. In the meantime, he used the apartment merely for sleeping and for changing his clothes, and tried to keep down the waves of self-pity and homesickness which assailed him at moments like this.

It had never occurred to Tibbell that he would have to face so many nights of loneliness and vague, unformed yearning once he had established himself in the city. But he was shy with girls and clumsy with men and he saw now that shyness and clumsiness were

One of America's most brilliant young writers, Irwin Shaw emerged with the publication of his war novel The Young Lions. A New Yorker by birth, he recently moved his home to Paris. The city completely captivates him and provides the backgronnd for his latest novel and many of his most happy stories.

exportable articles that passed from country to country without tax.

Each night, after a silent dinner with only a book for companion, Tibbell, with his neat American haircut, his uncreased, neat suit, his naive, questing, blue, polite American eyes, would go from one crowded terrasse of St Germain des Prés to another, drinking as little as he dared, waiting for the one brilliant night when he would be noticed by some glorious, laughing band of young people who, with the legendary freedom of the capital, would seize upon him, appreciate him, sweep him along with them in their expeditions.

But the one brilliant night never arrived. The summer was nearly over and he was as alone as ever, trying to read a book near the open window, through which the warm night breeze carried an erratic distant hum from the traffic of the surrounding city and a thin fragrance of river water and dusty September foliage. The thought of sleep was intolerable.

Tibbell put down the book—it was *Madame Bovary*, to improve his French—and went over to the window and looked out. He found himself looking out of the window a good deal of the time when he was in the apartment. There wasn't much to see. The apartment was one floor up, confronted by tightly locked shutters and flaky soot-grey stone walls. The street was narrow and looked as though it were waiting to be torn down to make way for a modern prison, and at the busiest of times carried very little traffic. Tonight it was silent, and deserted except for two lovers who made a single, unmoving shadow in a doorway across from him.

Tibbell peered at the lovers with envy and admiration. What a thing it was to be French, he thought, and experience no shame in the face of desire and be able to display it so honestly, on a public thoroughfare.

Tibbell turned away from the window. The lovers kissing in the arch of the doorway across the street disturbed him.

He tried to read, but he kept going over the same lines again and again—*Une exhalaison s'échappait de ce grand amour embaumé et qui, passant à travers tout, parfumait de tendresse l'atmosphère d'immaculation où elle voulait vivre.* He put the book down. He felt much sorrier for himself than for Emma Bovary. He would have to improve his French some other night.

"The hell with it," he said aloud, making a decision, and picked up the phone from its cradle on the bookcase full of German books. He dialled the overseas operator and asked for Betty's number in New York, in his careful, accurate, though unimproved French, which he had learnt in four years at college at Swarthmore.

The operator told him to hold on, saying that there was a possibility that she could put the call through immediately. He began to sweat a little, pleasurably, at the thought of talking to Betty within the next two minutes. He had a premonition that he was likely to say something original and historic tonight, and he turned out the light . . . he could express himself more freely in the dark.

But then the operator came on the line again to say that the call would take some time to put through.

Tibbell leaned back in his chair with his eyes half closed, and thought of what Betty's voice would sound like from the other side of the ocean, and how she would look, curled on the sofa of her tiny apartment twelve storeys above the streets of New York, as she spoke into the telephone. He smiled as he remembered the familiar, lovely, small image. He had only known Betty eight months, and if the Paris trip hadn't come up two months before, he was sure that a propitious moment would have presented itself in which to ask her to marry him. He was nearly thirty and if he was ever going to get married it would have to be soon.

Leaving Betty behind had been a sorrowful experience and it had only been by the exercise of the stoniest self-control that he had managed to get through their last evening together without risking everything then and there and asking her to follow him on the next plane. But he prided himself on being a sensible man and arriving to take up a new and temporary job in a new country with a new wife at his side was not his idea of how a sensible man should act.

Still, the combination of pleasure and longing with which, hour by hour, he thought of her, was something he had never experienced before and tonight he wanted to make powerful and naked statements to her that until now he had been too timid to voice . . . Tonight he was irresistibly moved to indulge himself in the sound of her voice and in his own avowal of love.

He waited impatiently for the phone to ring, trying to make the time seem shorter by imagining what it would be like if Betty were beside him now, and what they would be saying to each other if they were hand-in-hand in the same room instead of divided by three thousand miles of humming wire. He had closed his eyes, his head leaning back against the chair, a little smile on his lips as he remembered old whispers of conversation and imagined new exchanges—when he heard voices, harsh and excited, coming through the open window. The voices were passionate, insistent. Tibbell stood up and went to the window and looked down.

Below him outlined in the light of the street lamp stood three people, tensely together, arguing, their voices sometimes hushed, as though they were trying to keep their quarrel to themselves, and sometimes, in bursts of anger, carelessly loud and brutal. There was a man of about sixty, with grey hair and a bald spot, clearly visible from Tibbell's post at the window, and a young woman who was sobbing into a handkerchief, and a young man in a windcheater.

The girl had on a gay, flowered-cotton dress and her hair was blonde and piled high on her head. The old man looked like a respectable engineer or government official, robust and vaguely intellectual at the same time.

They were grouped around a Vespa that was parked in front of the building. During the most heated exchanges the young man kept stroking the machine, as though reassuring himself that in extremis a means of escape was still available to him.

"I repeat, monsieur," the old man was saying loudly, "you are a salaud." His speech had a rotund, self-important ring to it, as if he were accustomed to addressing large audiences.

"I repeat once more to you, Monsieur Banary-Cointal," the young man said equally loudly, "I am not a salaud." His speech was street-Parisian, rasping, rough, formed by twenty-five years of constant argument with the fellow citizens of his city, but his overall air suggested the student or laboratory assistant.

The young woman wept, her hands trembling on a large patent-leather handbag she was carrying.

"But you are," the old man said, his face close to the other man's face. "The worst kind. Do you wish proof?" It was an oratorical question. "I will give you proof. My daughter is pregnant. Due to your attentions. And what do you do now that she is in this condition? You abandon her. Like a serpent. And to add to the injury, you propose to get married tomorrow. To another woman."

Undoubtedly, the conversation would have had a different ring to it for a Frenchman who happened to overhear it, but to Tibbell's ear all spoken French was translated automatically into English that was constructed like a schoolboy's version of Racine.

"I will leave it to the opinion of the most neutral observer," Monsieur Banary-Cointal was saying, "if that is not the action of a man who deserves to be termed a salaud."

The young woman, standing stiffly upright, not yet looking pregnant, wept more loudly.

In the shadow of their doorway, the lovers shifted a little; a bare arm moved, a kiss was planted on an ear rather than on lips, a muscular arm took a new hold—but whether that was due to the commotion around the Vespa or to the natural fatigue and need for variation of prolonged amour Tibbell could not tell.

Farther down the street a car approached, with bright lights and an Italian roar of motor, but it stopped near the corner, swinging in to park in front of a closed laundry shop, and the lights were extinguished. The street was left to the disputants.

"If I'm getting married tomorrow," the young man said, "it's her fault." He pointed accusingly at the girl.

"I forbid you to go on," said Monsieur Banary-Cointal.

"I tried," the young man shouted. "I did everything I could. I lived with her for a year, didn't I?" He said this righteously, with pride and self-pity, as if he expected congratulations all round for his sacrifice. "At the end of the year it became clear to me—

if I ever wanted a worthy home for any children I might have, I would never get it from your daughter. It is time to speak frankly, monsieur. Your daughter conducts herself in an impossible manner. Impossible. In addition, her character is abominable."

" Be careful in your choice of words, young man," the father said.

" Abominable," the young man repeated. He waved his arms in emphasis and his long black hair fell over into his eyes. " As her father, I will spare you the details, but I will permit myself to say that never has a man had to bear such treatment from a woman who in theory shared his home for twelve months. Even the phrase makes me laugh," Raoul said, without laughing.

" When you say ' share a home,' you imagine that it means that a woman is occasionally physically present in the foyer—for example, when a man comes home to lunch or when he returns for an evening of peace and relaxation after a hard day's work. But if you imagine that in the case of your daughter, Monsieur Banary-Cointal, you are sadly mistaken. In the last year, Monsieur Banary-Cointal, I assure you I have seen more of my mother, of my maiden aunt in Toulouse, of the woman who sells newspapers opposite the Madeleine, than I have seen of your daughter. Ask for her at any hour of the day or night—winter or summer—and where was she? Absent! "

" Raoul," the girl sobbed, " how can you talk like that? I was faithful from the first day to the last."

" Faithful! " Raoul snorted contemptuously. " What difference does that make? A woman says she is faithful and believes that excuses everything from arson to matricide. What good did your fidelity do me? You were never home. At the hairdresser, at the cinema, at the Galéries Lafayette, at the Zoo, at the tennis matches, at the swimming pool, at the dressmaker, at the home of a girl friend in St-Cloud—but never home. Monsieur—" Raoul turned to the father—" your daughter is a woman who has only the most lively detestation of a home."

" A home is one thing, monsieur," the old man said, his voice trembling with parental emotion, " and a clandestine and illicit ménage is another. It is the difference between a church and a—" The old man hesitated, searching for the proper crushing comparison— " a racecourse."

" I swear to you, Raoul," the girl said, " if you marry me I will not budge from the kitchen."

" A woman will promise anything," Raoul said, " on the night before a man is due to marry somebody else." He turned brutally to the father. " I will give you my final judgment on your daughter. I pity the man who marries her, and if I were a good citizen and a good Christian, I would send such a man an anonymous letter of warning before he took the fatal step."

The young woman cried out as though she had been struck and threw herself against her father heartbrokenly, to sob against his shoulder. Her father patted her distractedly, saying, " There,

there, Moumou." While the girl brokenly repeated, " I love him, I love him, I can't live without him. If he leaves me I'm going to throw myself in the river."

" You see," the father said accusingly, over his daughter's bent, tragic head, " you serpent of ingratitude, she can't live without you."

" That's just too bad," Raoul said, his voice high with exasperation. " Because I can't live *with* her."

" I warn you," the father said, speaking loudly to be heard above the thunder of his daughter's sobs, " I hold you personally responsible if she throws herself in the river. I, her father, am saying this."

" The river! " Raoul laughed in harsh disbelief. " Call me when it happens. I will personally accompany her. Anyway, she swims like a fish. I'm surprised that a man your age can be innocent enough to be taken in by female guff like that."

Somehow, this last statement enraged Moumou more than anything else Raoul had said. With a sound that was a kind of mixture of growl and air-raid siren, Moumou leapt from the shelter of her father's arms and flung herself on Raoul, hurling him out into the middle of the street, whacking him ferociously with the huge leather bag, holding it by the handle, swinging it again and again like an Olympic hammer thrower.

From the noise it made as it smashed against Raoul's head and shoulders, Tibbell calculated that it weighed about ten pounds and was filled with glass and metalware. Raoul raised his arms to protect himself, shouting, dancing backwards, " Moumou, Moumou, you're losing control of yourself! "

To halt the brutal, arching blows of the bag, which were coming in at all angles, he lunged forward and grappled with Moumou, but she continued her attack with her sharply pointed shoes, kicking him pitilessly in the shins and grinding her high, needle-sharp heels into the soft suède of his moccasins. To Tibbell, watching bemused from his window, the couple seemed to be performing some eccentric tribal dance, with their shadows, thrown by the near-by lamp post, whirling around them and up and down the face of the buildings opposite in an elongated African pattern.

" Moumou, Moumou," Raoul shouted hoarsely, as he clutched her and at the same time kept up his painful, jigging dance, " what good does this do? It solves none of our problems. Stop it! "

But Moumou, now that she had started, had no mind to stop it. All the indignities, deceptions, and false hopes of her life were welling up in her, finding ecstatic expression in the blows and kicks with which she was belabouring her defaulting partner. The grunts and muffled growls that accompanied her efforts had a note of triumph and wild, orgiastic release in them, hardly fitting, Tibbell thought, for a public performance on a public street.

The father, who might have been expected to be disturbed by the spectacle of his pregnant daughter locked in hand-to-hand

combat with her faithless lover at this odd hour of the morning, never made a move to stop the action. He merely moved along the street with the struggle, circling it warily, keeping a keen eye on the principals.

The noise, however, had awakened sleepers and, here and there along the street, shutters opened a crack on dark windows and heads appeared briefly, with that French combination of impartiality, curiosity and caution which would lock the shutters fast on the scene of violence with the approach of the first gendarme.

By this time, Moumou had stamped and hammered Raoul some fifteen yards away from the point of the original attack and they were swaying and panting in front of the lovers who had been tranquilly kissing all this time in the shadow of the doorway on the other side of the street. But now, with the noise of battle on their very doorstep, as it were, and the contestants threatening invasion at any moment, the lovers separated, and the man stepped out protectively in front of the figure of the girl he had been crushing so cosily and for so long against the doorway. The man was short and burly, dressed in sports jacket and open-necked shirt.

"Here, here," the man in the sports jacket said authoritatively, seizing Raoul by the shoulders and pulling at him, "that's enough of that. Go home and go to sleep."

His appearance distracted Moumou for an instant. "Go back to your doorway fornication, Monsieur!" she said. "We don't need your advice."

At that moment, Raoul slid away from her and pounded up the street.

"Coward," Moumou shouted, and took off after him, swinging her bag menacingly, running with surprising speed and agility in her high-heeled, pointed shoes. She seemed actually to be gaining on Raoul when he came to the corner and ducked around it.

The street seemed strangely quiet now and Tibbell could hear the discreet clicking of shutters being closed, now that the principals had departed the scene.

But the father was still there, staring with melancholy, weary eyes at the corner around which he had last seen his daughter disappear, brandishing the patent-leather handbag. He turned his glance on the young man in the sports jacket, who was saying to his girl, "Well, there's a pair for you. Barbarians."

"Monsieur," the father said gravely, "who asked you to meddle in other people's affairs? It is the same all over this poor country. Nobody minds his own business any more. Privacy is a thing of the past. No wonder we are on the edge of anarchy. They were on the point of agreement when you destroyed everything."

"Listen, monsieur," the man in the sports jacket said belligerently, "I am by nature a simple, honourable man. I do not stand by idly while a man and a woman beat each other in my presence. It was my duty to separate them and, if you were not

old enough to be my grandfather, I would say that you should be ashamed of yourself for not having separated them sooner."

Monsieur Banary-Cointal examined the simple, honourable man with scientific detatchment, as though he were weighing the last statement judiciously, without prejudice. But instead of answering, he turned to the girl, still discreetly in shadow and arranging her ruffled hair with little pats of her hand. "Young woman," the old man said loudly, "you see what's ahead of you? The same thing will happen to you as happened to my daughter. Mark my words, you'll find yourself pregnant and that one—" the old man pointed like a prosecuting attorney at the sports coat— "that one will disappear like a hare in a cornfield."

"Simone," the man in the sports coat said, before the girl had a chance to reply, "we have better ways of spending our time than listening to this old windbag."

He pushed a button on the wall next to him and the door against which he and the girl had been leaning opened with an electric buzzing. With dignity, he took the girl's arm and escorted her into the deeper shadow of the inner court. The old man shrugged, his duty done, his warning to a careless generation delivered, as the huge wooden door clicked shut behind the interrupted lovers.

Deprived of further targets for his wisdom, Monsieur Banary-Cointal sighed, then walked slowly towards the corner around which his daughter had vanished in pursuit of Raoul. Tibbell could see him standing there, caught in the dark stone geometry of the city crossroads, a solitary and baffled figure, peering off in the distance, searching the lonely street for survivors . . .

Now there was the click of shutters again below Tibbell and old women's voices, seeming to rise from some underground of the night, made themselves heard, from window to window.

"Ah," one voice said, "this city is becoming unbearable. People will do anything on the street at any hour. Did you hear what I heard, Madame Harrahs?"

"Every word," a second old voice spoke in a loud, hoarse, accusing, concierge's whisper. "He was a thief. He tried to snatch her bag. One isn't safe after dark any more in Paris."

"Not at all, madame," the first voice said irritably. "I saw with my own eyes. She hit him. With her bag. Thirty or forty of the best. He was bleeding like a pig. He's lucky to be alive. Though only got what's coming to him. She's pregnant."

"Ah," said Madame Harrahs, "the salaud."

"Though to tell the truth," said the first voice, "she didn't seem any better than she should be. The one I feel sorry for is the old man, the father."

"Don't waste your pity," said Madame Harrahs. "It's probably all his fault. If a man hasn't authority, he has to expect the worst from his children. Besides, I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't have a little thing on the side himself, a little poupette in the Sixteenth. I got a good look at him. I know the type."

"Ah, the dirty old man," the first voice said.

Now Tibbell heard footsteps approaching from the corner and he turned to see the dirty old man approaching. The shutters clicked tight again and the old ladies subsided after their choric irruption, leaving the street to the weary sound of the old man's shoes on the uneven concrete and the asthmatic sighs he emitted with every other step. He stopped below Tibbell's window, looking sorrowfully at the Vespa, shaking his head, then sat down uncomfortably on the curb, his feet in the gutter, his hands dangling loose and helpless between his knees.

Tibbell would have liked to go down, but was uncertain whether Monsieur Banary-Cointal was in any condition that night to be consoled by foreigners.

Tibbell was on the verge of closing his own shutters, when he saw Moumou appear at the corner, sobbing exhaustedly, walking unsteadily on her high heels, the bag with which she had so vigorously attacked Raoul now hanging like a dead weight from her hand. The father saw her too and stood up, with a rheumatic effort, to greet her. When she saw the old man, Moumou sobbed more loudly.

The old man opened his arms and she plunged on to his shoulder, weeping and clutching him, while he patted her back.

"He got away," Moumou wept. "I'll never see him again."

"Perhaps it is for the best," the old man said. "He is far from dependable, that fellow."

"I love him, I love him," the girl said wetly. "I'm going to kill him."

"Now, now, Moumou . . ." The father looked around him uneasily, conscious of witnesses behind the shuttered windows.

"I'll show him," the girl said wildly. She broke away from her father and stood accusingly in front of the parked Vespa, glaring at it. "He took me out to the Marne on this the first time we went out together," she said in a throbbing voice, meant to carry the memory of ancient tenderness, betrayed promises, to unseen and guilty ears. "I'll show him."

With a swift movement, before her father could do anything to stop her, she took off her right shoe. Violently, holding the shoe by the pointed toe, she smashed the sharp heel into the headlamp of the scooter. There was the crash of breaking glass and a tinkling on the pavement, closely followed by a shriek of pain from Moumou.

"What is it? What is it?" The old man asked anxiously.

"I cut myself. I opened a vein." Moumou held out her hands, like Lady Macbeth. Tibbell could see blood spurting from several cuts on her hand and wrist.

"Oh, my poor child," the old man said distractedly. "Hold your hand still. "Let me see . . ."

But Moumou pulled her hand away and danced unevenly on her one shoe around the Vespa, waving her arm over the machine, spattering the wheels, the handlebars, the saddle, the back pillion,

with the blood that sprayed from her wounds. "There!" she shouted. "You wanted my blood, take it! I hope it brings you good luck!"

"Moumou, don't be so impetuous," the old man implored her. "You will do yourself a permanent harm." Finally he managed to grab his daughter's arm and inspect the cuts. "Oh, oh," he said. "This is dolorous. Stand still." He took out a handkerchief and bound her wrist tight. "Now," he said, "I will take you home and you will get a good night's sleep and you will forget about that serpent."

"No," Moumou said. She backed against the wall of the building on the opposite side of the street and stood there stubbornly.

"He will come back for his Vespa. Then I will kill him. And after that I will kill myself."

."Moumou . . ." the old man wailed.

"Go home, Papa."

"How can I go home and leave you like this?"

"I will wait for him if I have to stand here in this place all night," Moumou said, her words awash with tears. She gripped the wall behind her with her hands, as if to keep her father from taking her away by force. "He has to come here some time before the church. He won't get married without his scooter. You go home. I will handle him myself."

"I can't leave you here alone in this condition," the old man said sighing. Beaten, he sat down again on the curb to rest.

"I want to die," Moumou said.

The street was quiet again, but not for long. The door behind which the two lovers had taken refuge opened and the man in the sports jacket came out, his arm around his girl. They passed slowly beneath Tibbell's window, ostentatiously ignoring Moumou and her father.

The old man looked balefully up at the linked couple. "Young lady," he said, "remember my warning. Profit by the events you have witnessed tonight. If it is not too late already. Re-enter into your home. I speak as a friend."

The man in the sports jacket pulled away from his companion and stood threateningly in front of Moumou's father, "That's enough from you, old man. I do not permit anybody to speak like that in front of . . ."

"Come on, Edouard," the girl said, pulling the man away. "It is too late at night to become enraged."

"I ignore you, monsieur," Edouard said, then he let the girl lead him away.

A SEIZURE OF LIMERICKS

Said Isolde to Tristan: How curious!
King Mark is becoming quite furious.
Since we got off the boat
It's been *all* "Liebestod!"
Is it *possible* Wagner is spurious?

"Permit, permit . . ." Monsieur Banary-Cointal said loudly, getting in the last word, as the couple rounded the corner and disappeared.

Tibbell watched the old man and his daughter for another moment, wishing that the two of them would move away from their stations of affliction on his doorstep. It would be difficult to sleep, Tibbell felt, knowing that those two grieving, dissatisfied, vengeful figures were still outside his window, waiting for some horrid, violent last act of their drama.

He was just about to turn away when he heard a car door slam far down the street. He looked and saw a woman in a green dress striding swiftly towards him, away from the car that he had earlier noticed being parked near the far corner. Now the car lights switched on, very bright, and the car followed the woman as she half walked, half ran, in the direction of Moumou and her father. She was obviously in flight. Her dress shone a violent, electric lime colour in the headlights of the pursuing car.

The car, which was a bright red, new Alfa Romeo Guiletta, stopped abruptly just before it reached the old man, who was still sitting on the curb but with his head turned suspiciously in the direction of the woman bearing swiftly down on him as though he feared that she was bringing with her, stranger though she was, a new burden of trouble to load on to his bowed and tortured shoulders. The woman darted towards a doorway, but before she could press the button for entry, a man in a black suit leapt out of the car and seized her wrist.

Tibbell watched without surprise. By now he felt that the street below him was a preordained scene of conflict . . .

"No, you don't!" the man in the black suit was saying, pulling the woman away from the door. "You don't get away that easily."

"Let me go," the woman said, trying to escape. She was breathless and she sounded frightened and Tibbell wondered if now, finally, was the time for him to run down the stairs and enter into the night life of the street in front of his window . . .

"I'll let you go when you give me my three hundred francs," the man in the black suit said loudly. He was young and slender and Tibbell could see, by the light of the automobile headlights, that he had a small moustache and long, carefully brushed hair that fell over the back of his high, white collar. He had the kind of face which looks fitting in newspaper photographs that accompany the stories of the arrest of suspects after particularly well-planned jewel robberies and payroll thefts.

"I don't owe you any three hundred francs," the woman said.

Tibbell heard she had an accent, probably Spanish.

Said a lovely Greek muse known as Clytie
I look very nice in my nighty,
But beyond all compare,
I look better when bare,
And when I am bare I am bitey.

She looked Spanish, with luxuriant black hair swooping over her exposed shoulders, and a wide, shiny black leather belt around a very narrow waist. Her skirt was short and showed her knees.

"Don't lie to me," the man in the dark suit said, still holding the woman's wrist and shaking her arm angrily. "It was never my intention to buy them."

"And it was never my intention to let you follow me to my home," the woman snapped back at him, trying to pull away. "Let me go, you've annoyed me enough tonight!"

"Not until I get my three hundred francs," the man said, gripping her more firmly.

"Unless you let me go," the woman said, "I'll call for the police." The man glared at her and dropped her wrist. Then he slapped her hard across the face.

"Here, here!" said Moumou's father, who had been watching the affair with mournful interest. He stood up. Moumou, lost in the egotism of her own unhappiness, took no notice of what was happening.

The man in the dark suit and the Spanish woman stood close to each other, breathing heavily, looking curiously undecided, as though the slap had brought some new and unexpected problem into their relationship which for the moment confused them and made them uncertain about further action. Then the young man, his white teeth gleaming under his moustache, slowly raised his hand again.

"Once is enough," the woman said and ran over to Moumou's father for protection. "Monsieur," she said, "you have seen him strike me."

"The light is bad," the old man said, even in his sorrow instinctively extricating himself from possible formal involvement with the police. "And at the moment, I happened to be looking the other way. Still," he said to the young man, who was advancing menacingly on the Spanish woman, "let me remind you that striking a woman is considered in certain quarters to be a most serious offence."

"I throw myself on your protection, monsieur," the woman said, stepping behind Monsieur Banary-Cointal.

"Don't worry," the man with the moustache said contemptuously. "I won't hit her again. She is not worth the emotion. All I want is my three hundred francs."

"What do you think of a man," the woman said, from the shelter of the old man's bulk, "who buys a lady flowers and demands to be reimbursed?"

"To keep the record clear," the man with the moustache said, "let me say once and for all I never bought her any flowers . . .

Lithpt a thad little man from Duluth
I've got a thore tooth and itth loothe
What a needth a Martini
With O, jutht a teeny,
Or even not any, vermouth.

"When I went to the toilet she took the violets from the basket and when I came back the woman asked me for three hundred francs and rather than make a scene I . . ."

" Please," the old man said, interested now despite himself, " this is all very confusing. If you would be good enough to start from the beginning, perhaps I can be of service."

Tibbell was grateful to the old man for this request for clarification, since without it he was sure he would be kept awake most of the night trying to figure out just what the sequence of events had been which had resulted in this midnight chase and punishment. Tibbell had never hit a woman in his life and could not imagine ever doing so, and certainly never for three hundred francs.

" Let me reconstruct," the man in the dark suit said immediately, presenting his side quickly, before the Spanish woman could roil the crystal waters of truth. " I saw her sitting at a bar, waiting to be picked up."

" I was not waiting to be picked up," the woman said hotly. " I was on my way home from the cinema and I stopped to have a glass of beer, before going to bed."

" Enfin," the man in the dark suit said impatiently, " you allowed yourself to be picked up. If we are going to quibble about terms, we will be here all night."

" I allowed you to pay for one glass of beer," the woman said. " I am not responsible for any sordid interpretation you choose to put on it."

" You also allowed me to pay for three hundred francs' worth of violets," the man in the dark suit said.

" I allowed it as a small gesture of gallantry," the woman said haughtily. " In Spain one is used to gentlemen."

" You also allowed yourself to get into my car," the man in the dark suit said, " and you furthermore allowed yourself to inflame the emotions by kissing on the lips."

" That, now," the woman said dramatically to Moumou's father, " is a superb lie."

" If it's a lie," said the man in the dark suit, " what about this? " Violently, he seized the point of his white collar and pulled it away from his neck to show Monsieur Banary-Cointal.

The old man peered at it near-sightedly, bending close to the man in the dark suit. " What is it? " the old man asked. " It's awfully dark here. I can't see anything."

"Lipstick," said the man in the dark suit. " Look." He took the old man's arm and pulled him in front of the headlights, so that the old man could inspect the collar.

Said a curve: I'm becoming hysterical.
It is hell to be merely numerical.
I bend and I bend,
But where will I end
In a world that is hopelessly spherical?

CONRAD AIKEN

Monsieur Banary-Cointal stood up. " There's no doubt about it," he said. " Lipstick."

" Ah," said the man in the dark suit, casting a look of angry triumph at the Spanish woman.

" It is not mine," she said coldly. " Who knows where this gentleman has been spending his time, and who knows how many times a week he changes his shirt? "

" I warn you," said the man in the dark suit, his voice thick with rage, " I regard that as insulting."

" What difference does it make whose lipstick it is? " the woman said. " You do not please me. All I want is to be allowed to go home alone."

" Ah," said Moumou, her attention finally caught, " if that were only possible—to go home alone."

Everybody, including Moumou's father, looked puzzledly for a moment at the sombre figure against the wall, as though it had been a statue that had given cryptic utterance.

" My dear man," said Monsieur Banary-Cointal reasonably, addressing the man in the dark suit, " certainly this lady has made herself very clear." He made a slight bow in the direction of the Spanish woman, who nodded politely in answer. " She doesn't demand very much. Just to go to her own home in peace. Surely, this is not too much to ask."

" She can go wherever she damn pleases," said the man in the dark suit, " as soon as she gives me my three hundred francs."

A look of censure creased the old man's face. " Monsieur," he said, with some asperity, " I am a little surprised that a man like you, the possessor of an automobile of this quality and price— " he touched the gleaming hood of the little Italian car—" could really need three hundred francs enough to make such a . . ."

" It is not a question of three hundred francs," said the man in the dark suit, his voice beginning to be edged, too, at this imputation of miserliness. " It would not even be a question if the sum were fifty thousand francs. It is a question of principle. I have been led on, I have been inflamed.

"As I mentioned before, I have been induced to spend my money—the amount has nothing to do with the matter, I assure you, monsieur—all corruptly and under false pretences. I am a generous and reasonable man but I do not like to be cynically made a fool of by a putain! "

" Here, now," the old man said sternly.

" What's more, look at her hand! " The man in the dark suit seized the woman's hand and held it in front of Monsieur Banary-Cointal's eyes.

" Do you see that? The wedding ring? By a putain, who, on top of everything else, is married! There is nothing more disgraceful than a Spanish whore with a wedding ring," the man in the dark suit shouted.

" Here, that's enough of that," Monsieur Banary-Cointal said

with authority, as the woman unexpectedly began to sob. The old man had had enough of women's tears for the night, and this new flood made him testy. "I will not allow you to talk in such terms in front of ladies, one of whom happens to be my daughter," he said to the man in the dark suit. "I suggest you leave immediately."

"I will leave when I get my three hundred francs," the man said stubbornly, crossing his arms.

"Here!" Monsieur Banary-Cointal dug angrily in his pocket and pulled out some coins. "Here are your three hundred francs!"

He threw them at the man in the dark suit. They bounced off his chest and on to the pavement. With great agility, the man in the dark suit bent and scooped up the coins and threw them back into Monsieur Banary-Cointal's face. "If you're not careful, monsieur," the old man said with dignity, "you are going to get a punch in the nose."

The man in the dark suit raised his fists and stood there, in the pose of a bare-knuckle English fighter of the early part of the eighteenth century. "I await your attack, monsieur," he said formally.

Both women now wept more loudly.

"I warn you, monsieur," Monsieur Banary-Cointal said, taking a step backwards, "that I am sixty-three years of age, with a faulty heart, and besides, I wear glasses, as you can see. The police will be inclined to ask you some very searching questions in the event of an accident."

"The police!" said the man in the dark suit. "Good. It is the first sensible suggestion of the evening. I invite you all to get into my car and accompany me to the commissariat."

"I am not getting into that car again," said the Spanish woman.

"I am not budging from here," Moumou said, "until Raoul gets back."

There was a ringing behind Tibbell, and he suddenly became conscious that it had been going on for some time, and that it was the telephone. He stumbled across the dark room and picked up the instrument, the voices outside his window becoming a blurred buzzing on the night air. He wondered who could be calling him at this time of the night.

"Hullo," he said into the mouthpiece.

"Is this Littré two-five-seven-six?" an impatient female voice crackled through the receiver.

"Yes," Tibbell said.

"Your call to New York," the operator said, "we are ready now."

"Oh yes," Tibbell said. He had forgotten completely that he had put the call in hand for Betty. He tried to compose himself and

put himself back into the tender and rosy mood that had swept over him an hour before when he had decided to call her. "I'm waiting."

"Just a minute, please." There was some Atlantic, electric howls on the wire and Tibbell pulled the telephone away from his ear. He tried to hear what was being said outside, but all he could distinguish was the noise of a car starting up and surging down the street.

He stood next to the German's bookcase, the telephone held loosely along his cheek, remembering that he wanted to tell Betty how much he loved her and missed her, and perhaps—if the conversation turned irrevocably in that direction as indeed it might—to tell her that he wanted to marry her. He found himself breathing heavily, and the ideas churned confusedly in his head, and when he tried to think of a proper opening phrase, all he could think of was, *There is nothing more disgraceful than a Spanish whore with a wedding ring.*

"Just a moment, please," said an American voice. "We are on the line."

There was some more electrical scratching and Tibbell switched the phone to his other ear and tried to make out what was being said downstairs, and at the same time to push from his mind the remark about the wedding ring.

"Miss Thompson is not home," the American voice said with great crispness and authority. "She has left word she will come back in an hour. Do you wish us to put the call in then?"

"I . . . I . . ." Tibbell hesitated.

He remembered the old man's admonition to the girl who had been kissing in the doorway—*Profit by the events you have witnessed tonight.*

"Can you hear me, sir?" the crisp New World voice was saying. "Miss Thompson will be back within an hour. Do you wish to place the call then?"

"I . . . no," Tibbell said. "Cancel the call, please. I'll make it some other time."

"Thank you." America clicked off.

Tibbell put the phone down slowly. After a moment, he walked across to the window, and looked down. The street was empty and silent. Unfinished, unfinishable, unresolved, irresolvable, the conflict, the inextricable opponents, had moved off into the darkness, and now there were only fleeting admonitory echoes, ghosts with warning fingers raised to vanishing lips.

Then Tibbell saw a figure stealing furtively down the other side of the street, keeping close to the walls. It was Raoul. He came out into the light of the lamp-post to inspect the scooter. He kicked once at the broken glass on the pavement. Then he waved at the corner.

A girl came running out towards him, her white dress gay and dancing and bridal on the dark street.

As she sat on the pillion behind Raoul and put her arms lovingly around his waist, she laughed softly. Her laughter rose lightly and provocatively to Tibbell's window.

Raoul started the Vespa, with the usual loud, underpowered, falsely important snarl. The Vespa, without headlamp, sped down the street, the white dress dancing in the wind, slanting out of sight at the far corner.

Tibbell sighed and silently wished the bride luck.

Downstairs, there was the creak of a shutter.

" Spaniards," the night voice said, " what can you expect from Spaniards? "

The shutter creaked again and the voice ceased.

Tibbell closed his own shutters. As he stepped back into the dark room he was thankful for the first time that he had gone to college at Swarthmore for his education.

© Irwin Shaw 1964

SERPENT'S TOOTH !

A titled lady honoured me with an elaborate assignment. She brought a number of photographs of a young man, very much her junior I should say, whom she asked me to tattoo, a dozen times, on her shoulder-blades. I found it hard to preserve his likeness in all the pictures, while also ensuring that his facial expression changed. At last I was satisfied, and below the multiple tattoo I put the final touch, *Tony—My Beloved*, although in truth I was not sorry to be seeing the last of Tony.

Later that year, the lady arranged another appointment. She arrived looking sad and pale.

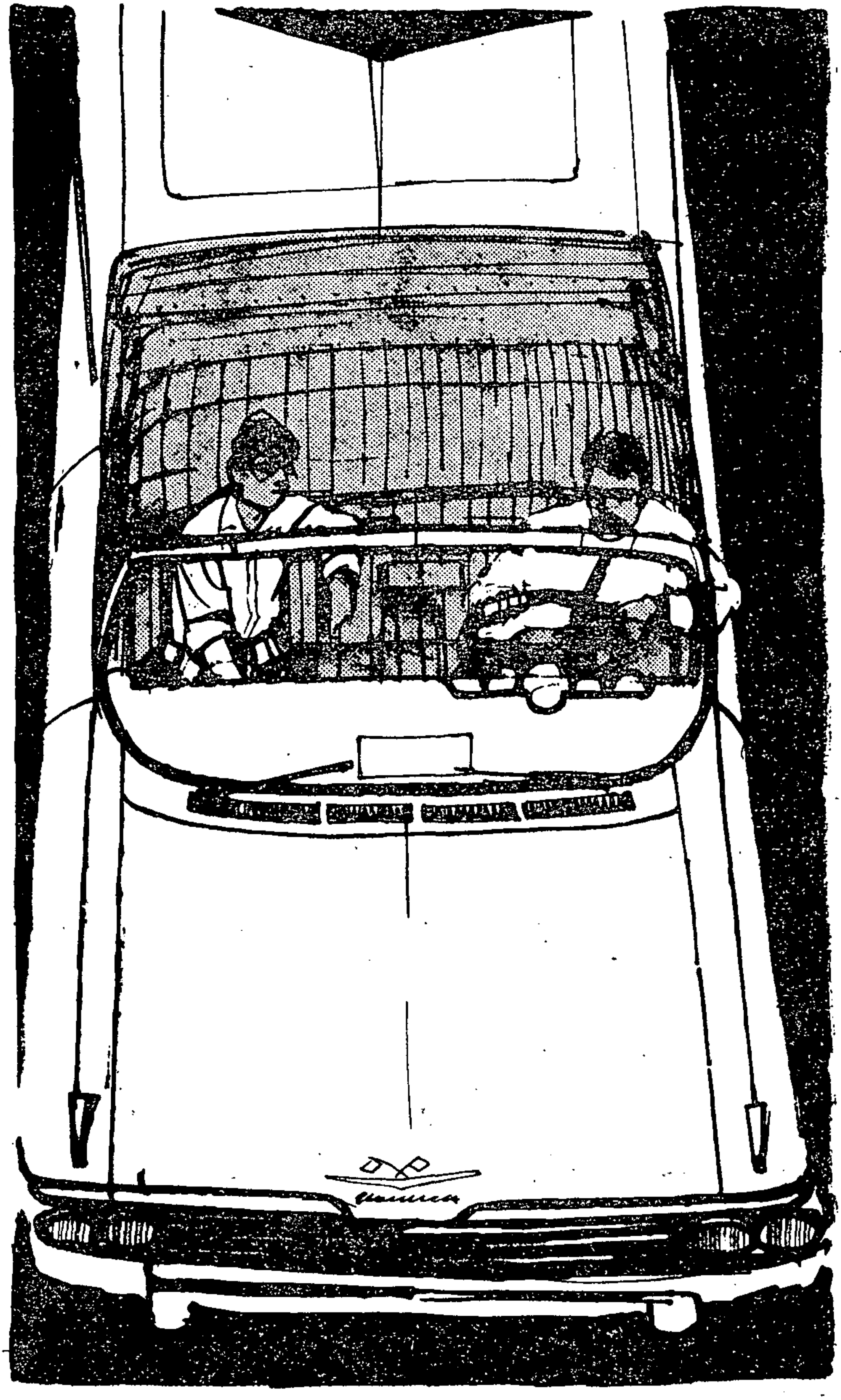
" I want you, Professor, to make a certain change on the tattoo," she said.

I was taken aback because it would have been extremely difficult to make any major changes in such a large and intricate piece of work. But, before I could protest, the lady continued, " The portraits can remain as they are. I want the inscription changed." In a whisper she added, " You must take out the words *My Beloved*. Can you do it? "

" Yes, Milady," I said, sighing with relief, " that will be quite simple."

" Good," she said. " Put *Tony——THE SNAKE* instead." I did. I had never liked the fellow . . .

GEORGE BURCHETT AND PETER LEIGHTON,
Memoirs of a Tattooist



Cloak-and-dagger intrigue, secret missions, romance in far off places are all part of the life of Geoffrey Household. Now living in a quiet English farmhouse, he draws on his real life escapades to produce plots that are a strange exciting blend of adventure, irony and his own special brand of very dry wit.

SECRET POLICE

BY GEOFFREY HOUSEHOLD

HE WAS shabby even for a passenger who had worn for two weeks the same creased suit of semi-tropical clothes down in the immigrant accommodation of the M.S. *Patagonia.* He was aware that he had aroused the fury of a large and nationally important shipping line. And his passport was out of date.

" If you would be so good as to accompany me to my office, sir . . ." the Port Security Officer invited.

Mr. Bernard Vasey came willingly enough, accepting a chair and a cigarette in the manner of a man who had a clean conscience and was superbly indifferent to his appearance. He managed it by forcing himself to remember that he was more accustomed to give orders to minor officials than to receive them.

" My passport is sufficient proof of British nationality," he said. " I am under no obligation to have it stamped merely to land in the United Kingdom."

The Port Security Officer made no comment except to ask why he had not had his passport renewed by the nearest British Consul to his place of residence.

" He was seven hundred miles away."

" Why did you not attend to it at Pernambuco before you embarked? "

" Because the *Patagonia* was due to sail."

" Would you care to account for the fact that when the *Patagonia* called at Vigo you endeavoured to remain in Spain illegally? "

"Any complaint from General Franco?"

"After you had paid your fare at Pernambuco you had little or no money left. Yet when you were forcibly escorted on board by Vigo police it would appear that you had acquired a considerable sum."

"I won it at cards."

Bernard Vasey was conscious that his answer sounded weak. He felt embarrassed about that card session. He feared that he might be looking guilty and tried to regain the initiative.

"Inspector, you have undoubtedly been asked to grill me by a very angry shipping line," he said, slightly raising his heavy eyebrows. "I question whether you are not exceeding your duty. And in any case you will not uncover any criminal activities."

"Your third-class cabin was filled with flowers, bottles of wine, and other articles of value," continued the Security Officer, unmoved.

"I declared them."

"Where did they come from?"

"From friends."

That seemed to shut him up. There was, after all, no reason why a poor third-class passenger should not have rich friends. What about students? But now this obstinate official, after drawing a blank with his nonsense about money, was off again.

"I see from your passport that you were in Cuba shortly before the revolution."

"I was. A holiday. Why not?"

"Your political sympathies are left wing?"

"My political sympathies vary, Inspector. From a business point of view I like to be on the winning side. On the other hand, the sight of desperate poverty does occasionally . . . Oh lord, I see! Cuba! Has something been passed to you by our consul in Vigo?"

"I cannot disclose sources of information, sir."

Mr. Vasey was at last perturbed. He had not returned to his own country for some years. To judge by newspaper reports—though he told himself that they always exaggerated—it was less free-and-easy than it had been. Possibly there were ways in which officials could make themselves quietly unpleasant to suspected communists. He was confident that he could remake a satisfactory future for himself, but perhaps not easily with a question-mark against his name.

"I shall have to explain," he said. "I'm afraid I didn't think it essential.

"To start from the beginning: having been offered a free, air passage from up country to Pernambuco . . ."

"By whom?"

"By Brazilian police. Politics, not crime. My God, not what you mean by politics! It was just that I was aware of certain disreputable secrets in the private life of our newly elected State Attorney. I had no intention of spilling them, but he couldn't take the risk. You wouldn't take it yourself, Inspector, if you, for example . . . well, I mean . . . well, of course such a thing is quite unthinkable.

"On arrival at Pernambuco I had just enough money to buy my passage home. The voyage dragged, as voyages do when one is unable to use the bar. Fortunately third-class passengers are provided with free wine at meals. An insurance, no doubt, against the scandal of suicide.

"When the *Patagonia* called at Vigo two days ago, I resented my poverty more than ever. I had an old and precious friend in that city. His true name and responsibilities I shall conceal. Let us call him Don Alonso."

"If I am to give any credence to your story, sir, I shall require names and addresses."

"Well, you won't get them!" replied Vasey, his spirit momentarily restored by the thought of his old friend.

"Together with professions and descriptions," the Port Security Officer went on, ignoring him.

"I'll be delighted to give you a description if it's any good to you. Eyes brown and generally laughing. Nose classical. Let me see . . . Yes! About my size. Short upper lip. Mouth thin and mobile. But since you aren't likely to meet him all you need know is that his charm and efficiency have very rightly promoted him to a position where he is below the Lieutenant-Governor of the province but considerably above—if I may say so without offence—the Port Police.

"Dressed as I was and so obviously destitute I refused to go ashore and call on Alonso. I contented myself with leaning over the rail and unkindly watching the importunities of guides, curio sellers, restaurant runners and taxi drivers as they attacked the first-class passengers.

"The noble people of Spain, Inspector, despise foreigners in the mass; from such pitiable objects one may extract money without demeaning oneself. But when a foreigner presents himself as an individual he is considered to share the common sorrows of humanity. In remembering that I began to feel ashamed of myself.

"I saw that all through that morning of melancholy sulking I had been putting pride before friendship. Alonso had never hesitated to call on me in days when he had nothing but a horse of doubtful ownership and the clothes he rode in. That was in Nicaragua. Though an alien, he could not resist dabbling in politics. At the time it seemed to me folly. But when he returned home to Spain his experience proved invaluable.

"This debate within myself went on far too long before warmth and decency overcame the unsuspected Joneses in my character. I did what little I could to improve my appearance and set out for Alonso's office. Fortunately it was hot enough to carry my coat, and my shirt was clean.

"Even so, the porter was not impressed and conducted me to a waiting-room where the applicants for government attention were of the humblest. But my card at least was of virginal whiteness. I had some hope that it would reach Alonso's desk. It did. Do you know the Spanish people, Inspector?"

"No, sir. They give very little trouble."

"I only asked so as to know how much I must explain. There's a grain of truth in most of the exaggerations, good or bad, which everyone has heard about them, and I think many of these myths derive from the splendour with which they give their hearts when they give them at all.

"Alonso shot out of his office sparkling with exclamations of welcome. He cleared up the affairs of the day with the decision and efficiency of a Spaniard in a hurry, and took me out to lunch. I had wasted too much time in hesitation. It was then two o'clock and the *Patagonia* was due to sail in the early afternoon.

"From the terraces of our restaurant we could see her clearly—a fine twenty-five thousand tons of speed and luxury moored at the Ocean Quay. At a quarter past three her siren roared a warning, and I regretfully pushed back my chair though we had only reached the fish. Alonso told me to sit down and stop fussing. The ship, he said, would not leave till after four. I assumed that he was in a position to know.

"There was now time to tell him something of my future plans and my sudden and disastrous expulsion from Brazil . . ."

"Would you care to repeat those facts to me, sir—very briefly?"

"I would not, Inspector. To you as an Englishman my story would appear most unlikely, whereas to Alonso it was obviously and instantly true. You are accustomed here to politicians who do not take their profession seriously enough to be corrupt.

"We had reached the comfortable stage of the cigars when the

Agent of the Line joined us in the restaurant. He had been waiting for my friend at his office and had only just discovered his whereabouts. He begged Alonso to intervene with the Chief of Customs who was holding up the *Patagonia* on a serious and complicated charge of inaccuracy in the ship's manifest.

" Alonso provided him with coffee and a brandy, and asked for details. It appeared that crates of sheet rubber landed at Vigo did not correspond to their proper weight and description. The Customs suspected them of containing arms. They had been shipped from Pernambuco."

Bernard Vasey looked at the Port Security Officer and was satisfied by his reaction. His account of the agent's irruption into lunch was quite true except for one detail. The crates had in fact been shipped from Rio. But he had noticed that his interrogator was allowing his attention to wander; it was essential that he should be convinced that every word was worth the hearing. For that reason Vasey deliberately injected the mention of Pernambuco, and was gratified to watch the expressionless face across the desk become even more expressionless.

" Alonso at once sprang into action, eager as always to help the underdog in any clash with officialdom. He cursed the Customs and said that they were inclined to see bogies under their beds; their informants were the dregs of the port and notoriously unreliable. He implored the Agent not to be impatient with his country's bureaucracy. It must be allowed to look ridiculous sometimes. That was the price a business man had to pay for orderly government. He could not intervene, but—since the matter could be said to concern the security of the State—at least he had the power to order the political branch of the police to investigate at once; they would see that the ship was not delayed a moment longer than was necessary to clear up this ridiculous rumour.

" I was sorry that my friend should be drawn into all this, but it was luck for me. When the Agent had left and Alonso had made a long telephone call to his office, we drove to his delightful bachelor home on the shore of the inner harbour where we passed an hour or more with a swim, cool drinks in the shade, and the exclamatory conversation of old friendship. I was no longer anxious when I heard the distant bellowing of the *Patagonia*, for Alonso was in continual touch with her. He said that there might even be time—knowing the Customs—for us to dine before the ship sailed. Anyway he had asked a few friends out to meet me.

" Meanwhile his valet had been giving skilled attention to

this suit, still spotted by the mildew of the rain forests and the nourishing soup of the *Patagonia* . . ."

"You said this friend of yours was about your size, Mr. Vasey?"

"Near enough. Slightly broader shoulders and less backside."

"Why did he not lend you a coat of his own for this party?"

"That, Inspector, would have been an indelicacy. It would have shown that he had noticed and was ashamed.

"I was about to speak, I believe, of the party. There were two girls and one man. I will describe the man first, distinguishing him by the name of Juan. He had some connection with the family, and was undoubtedly a political boss and Alonso's protector in high places. He must have been in his early fifties and looked it, though at the moment on holiday. He was a formidable fellow, somewhat like a frog—yellow and wrinkled, with bags under his eyes. It was clear that he had often heard of me from Alonso.

"The girls were charming. When Spanish women get away from mother, Inspector, they are inclined to increase the distance rapidly. Frasquita was a poetess in a small way and descended from everybody who had ever mattered. Her real claims to distinction, however, were delicately physical. Luisa was a secretary in Alonso's office. To the simple taste of a wider public she might have appeared a trifle severe in type. But a tiny waist and high intelligence amply compensated for what I may call her white-collar qualities . . ."

"If you would come to the point, Mr. Vasey. I am quite ready to assume that there was a mixed party."

"I fear my story is still some pleasant hours away from its point, Inspector, but I will pass over them as quickly as I can. Meanwhile let us not forget those twenty-five thousand tons of *Patagonia*, frantically calling on the British Consul for help, radioing her home port and subject to the inquisitions of what liberals call a police state and authoritarians a benevolent dictatorship. To make matters worse, the *Patagonia* cherished in her luxury suite the Managing Director of the Line, impatient as any other tycoon returning from holiday.

"In order not to delay the ship, Alonso had cut right through all red tape and simply ordered the dubious crates to be hoisted back on board; they could be unloaded, after giving the Customs time for reflection, two weeks later when the *Patagonia* called again at Vigo on her outward voyage to the Americas.

"I am surprised that the Line did not accept that very reasonable solution. Perhaps it wished to, and couldn't. The Managing

Director may have been determined to impress both his wife and his captain by a display of obstinacy. The Customs may have complained that Alonso had no right to order any such thing.

"However it was, we had another visit from the distracted Agent. Alonso was once more as helpful as a civil servant could be. He waived all formalities and said that, of course, the crates could be unloaded again if the Agent could rustle up some dock labour to handle them at that late hour. No doubt a foreman and a gang could be found in the taverns. He guaranteed that the Port Authority and the Workers' Syndicate would have no objection. He offered the assistance of his police. Everything possible would be done to help the *Patagonia* out of the mess which those nitwits who called themselves Customs Officers had made.

"I could not help feeling sorry for the ship, Inspector, though my interest in her, as a mere passenger in the slave hold, was limited. All those first-class passengers, those pointedly virile officers in white and gold, those state-rooms with private balconies, those lounges and bars which my imagination—for I hadn't seen them—clothed most gloriously with panelling and tapestries! All that urgent cargo for which you here had booked the cranes, the labour, and the transport! When one thinks of the expense of it all and the charges for demurrage, one asks oneself—at least I do—whether the Line should not have handed over some vast guarantee and cleared the ship. But Latins can be difficult when they stick to the letter of the law.

"It began to look as if I might be able to stay to dinner, though in Spain that meal is seldom taken before ten. Meanwhile the five of us settled down to a game of poker . . ."

"Assuming that your story is true, Mr. Vasey, how did you sit down to poker with no money in your pocket?"

"Alonso financed me, Inspector. I had flatly refused to take a loan from him or any assistance whatever, for I wouldn't have him think that I had come ashore for that purpose. But I could hardly sit watching the game like an empty jukebox. Politeness compelled me to accept a stake."

"It was at this game that you claim to have won?"

"I did. At the time I put it down to being somewhat more sober than Alonso and Juan. I now think that unlikely. Indeed I am regrettably certain that Alonso had arranged that they should lose to me whenever it could be done without arousing my suspicion.

"That was all the easier since our rules were complicated. The two ladies were playing strip poker when they lost and for money when they won. It worked out to the general satisfaction.

Luisa, for example, holding a full house against Juan's four twos raised him with all her cash winnings and continued to raise him on the alternative terms. Since she was a respectable secretary, the position, though not without its piquancy, was embarrassing. On the next hand we all threw in to her pair of kings, and thenceforth could reasonably consider her heightened colour to be due to Alonso's flow of liquor.

"I had just cleaned up a jackpot of fifteen thousand pesetas and the poetess was looking charmingly like Botticelli's Aphrodite —a picture, Inspector, but you will have found variations of the same theme on confiscated postcards—when Alonso was called to the telephone. He came back folding and unfolding his hands —his favourite gesture when life was getting him down—and said that we should have to leave to catch the *Patagonia*. He apologised to me and to us all. When I asked him why the devil he should feel it was his fault, he replied that the fact was . . . but this is so important that I will give you the ensuing conversation in direct speech, translating freely but with scrupulous accuracy.

"'The fact is, Bernardo, that she can't sail till I allow it,' he explained, 'but I have now run out of excuses for holding her. And here we are sitting down to a really promising evening with dinner nearly ready! Why do British Lines have to be so infernally correct that one can't get anything on them?'

"'The hell they're correct!' Juan said—he must have been a brilliant administrator, he didn't even have to stop and think—'I understand that there is a passenger missing from the *Patagonia*.'

"'That wouldn't stop her sailing without him,' Alonso replied. 'We should have a case if he were a very undesirable immigrant. Have you ever been a member of the communist party?' he asked, turning on me fiercely.

"The bags under his eyes were frightening. They filled out when he was interrogating a suspect. I said I had nothing to do with communism. For the moment I took him quite seriously. I was still trying to adjust myself to the revelation that all the *Patagonia's* troubles had been engineered by Alonso.

"'Have you ever been in Cuba?'

"'Not since Castro. I was there a few weeks before.'

"'A few weeks before!' Juan exclaimed. 'Did you hear that, Alonso? He is probably responsible for the whole thing. We can't have a dangerous revolutionary of that sort loose in Spain. Hold the ship until the police find him!'

"'I still don't see how I can, Juan.'

"'Have they reported a passenger missing?'

"'No, they haven't.'

"'Deliberately permitting the escape of a political, Alonso?'

"'It demands the closest investigation. I will hold the captain personally responsible. Or should it be the purser?'

"'Damned if I know! Let the Port Police sort it out!'

"'What about the British Consul, Juan?'

"'What about him? Order someone with imagination to call on him at once and whisper *Cuba* loudly! Tell him that it is absolutely essential that the fellow be found and put on board the *Patagonia*. We don't want to have to shoot him. Your deal, Frasquita, and remember what Bernardo told you about never drawing to the middle of a straight.'

"Inspector, it was dawn when the police found me wandering in the sort of street to which a drunk would naturally gravitate. After repeatedly embracing me, Alonso and Juan had turned me out of their car on to the pavement. They apologised for the unavoidable indignity and assured me that the police had orders to treat me with respect when I was picked up. In fact they continued to apologise in such loud voices that windows were opening, and I had to beg them to drive off before they were compromised.

"Five minutes later I was asked for my papers by two unpleasant individuals in plain clothes. They arrested me triumphantly. I was hardly treated with respect. Firm but genial contempt for an intoxicated barbarian was the general tone. From the police station I was marched on board the *Patagonia*.

"There under the British flag the flow of language was regrettable. The jurisdiction of ship's masters is extensive, but they do not take advantage of it, Inspector, to prosecute their officers for public obscenity. My cabin door was locked upon me and only opened when we were safely at sea. That was well into the morning. Naturally the Port Offices had to open before the ship could be cleared."

"Very interesting, Mr. Vasey. And the presents?"

"Oh, the presents! Yes, the presents. I can't help feeling that without them the Line might never have recommended that you should grill me. They would have written me off as just another irresponsible drunk who had missed his ship and aroused suspicion. But the presents were the last straw.

"Just before the *Patagonia* sailed, they had all been deposited in the First Class, outside the Purser's office. Such delightful

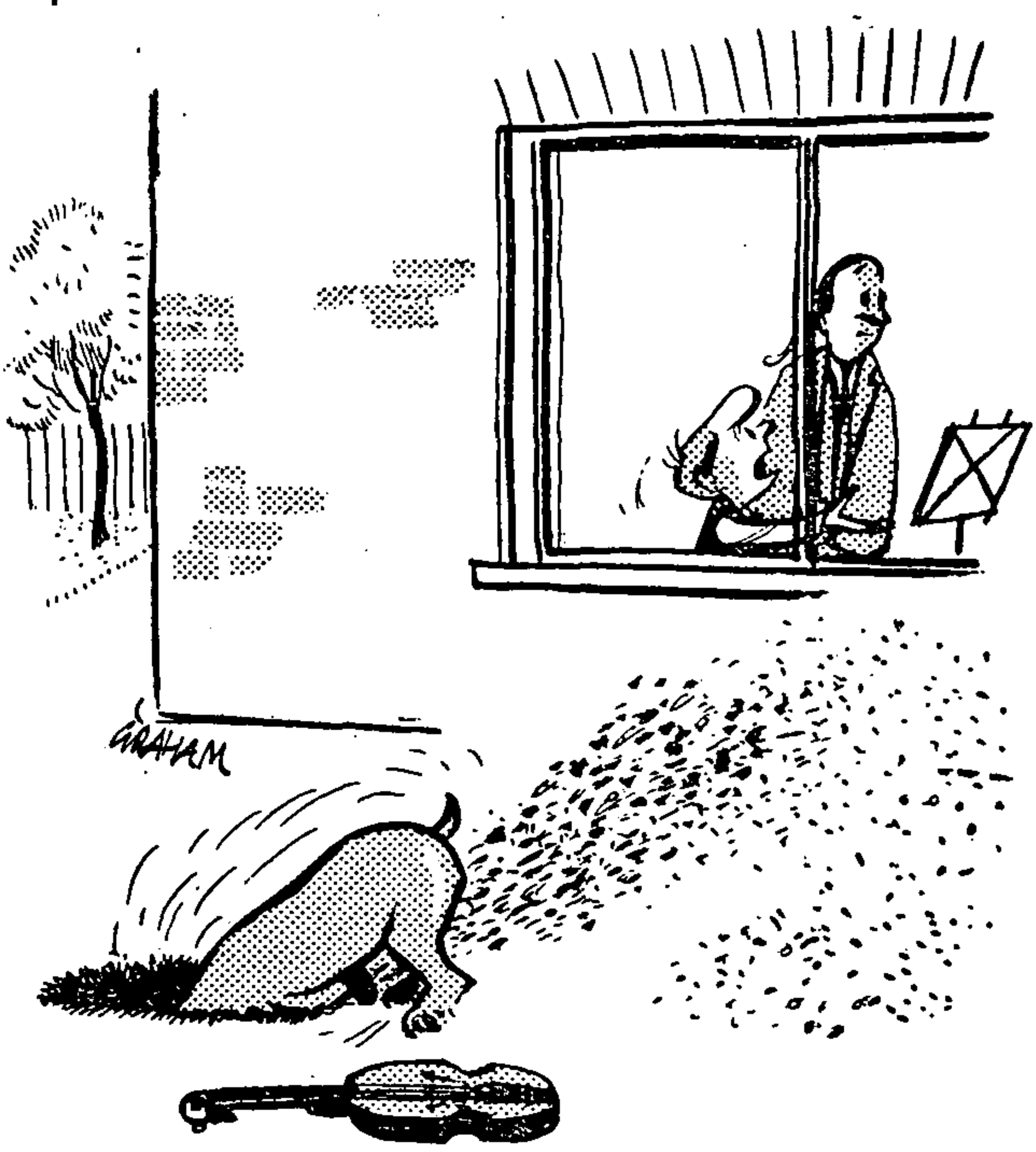
baskets! Such ribbons in the red-and-yellow of Spain! The Purser naturally assumed that they were intended for the Managing Director of the Line, and delivered them to his state-room. So when the director had read and with difficulty believed the name to which all this filmstar loot was addressed, insult was added to demurrage.

"My cabin was unlocked to admit a procession of grinning stewards who deposited the stuff on the opposite bunk, fortunately empty. Alonso must have ordered the lot well beforehand, but I have no doubt at all that it was Juan, still in an expansive mood and with the hangover yet to come, who insisted on the cards bearing the inscription: *Comrade Bernardo Vasey, from his international admirers.*

"May I catch my train now, Inspector?"

© Geoffrey Household 1964

Augustus and his faithful hound



"It was here, beside the music stand!!"

Pursuant to my duties as Rodent Officer . . .

ONE FOR THE RECORD

BY YOUNGMAN CARTER

To Arthur Gale,
Chief Inspector of Sanitation & Hygiene,
North Western Zone, London.

Private and Confidential

Dear A.G.,

Please forgive me for writing direct to you in the middle of your busy season, instead of going through *Sewage* (*M*) or *Maintenance* (*M and P*) but the enclosed report from one of my operatives seems to me to be something that ought to be examined within the next few weeks rather than waiting for *Deferred Projects*, et cetera, at the Annual General.

My regards to Mrs. G. and young Ron.

Yours truly,
Henry Dixon
Inspector, Sub Area B

Enclosure: From The Rodent Officer, Sub Area B

Subject: RODENTS, MOVEMENT OF

1. Pursuant to my duties in this department, I have maintained a detailed record of the incidence of rodents and the numbers regularly exterminated in each division of the area. I now have to report that in Section 17 there is a pattern of increase occurring at regular intervals (*see Appendix A*) of up to 98%.
2. As you are aware, the movement of rodents has various basic causes, notably large scale rebuilding, destruction of slum properties, removal of dumps, modernisation of sewage systems, etc. These considerations do not apply within or near Section 17. Since no adjacent area has been affected on the occasions noted in *Appendix A* and there has been no deterioration in the sewage system (installed

1890, modernised 1927, 1954) the cause is considered to lie within the area itself or considerably further afield.

3. The centre of increase would appear to lie within the triangle formed by Boundary Road, Marsham Street, and Upper Grange Avenue. These are well constructed semi-detached houses, mainly erected in 1890, now sub-divided and accommodating units of personnel of an average income of £1,500 p.a. On the corner of Boundary Road and Marsham Street there is a group of shops comprising a fishmonger's, a grocery store, a newspaper/tob./conf. and Rampole's Miniature Theatre Shop. All of these establishments have been the subject of most careful examination and supervision. There is no ground for supposing any of the Hygiene Regulations have not been observed.
4. There has been a large number of complaints concerning the incidence of rodents from residents in the area defined and these have been investigated and found fully justified.
5. There is no animal dealer, pet shop, or private zoo within two miles of the area.
6. Considerable damage to property has occurred and it is feared that the Ratepayers' Association may take action and cause unfortunate publicity to be attracted to the matter.
7. Sanction for the addition of two Temporary Assistant Rodent Operatives to the normal quota of staff is requested. The M.O.H. (Dr. Hubbard) is understood to support this suggestion.

Conclusion: This movement of rodents would appear to be caused by the change of direction of some underground stream or subterranean network. The advice of a geologist could be helpful. Perhaps Archives could assist in the question of obsolete drainage systems, though this officer can find no trace of any such stream or tunnel in the Borough Records.

R. Bates, Rodent Officer

From Arthur Gale to Henry Dixon

Dear Henry,

I don't like the sound of this at all. I've never had a Parliamentary Question yet and don't want to start. I take it you have waived any existing regulations about the keeping of domestic pets (i.e. cats and dogs) that may be in force?

As a first step I'm asking a friend of mine, Anthony Bodkin, *Weights and Measures*, who is a naturalist in his spare time, to investigate. Please help him all you can.

My best regards to Mrs. D. and the twins.

Yours, A.G.

To Arthur Gale from Anthony Bodkin

Dear Arthur,

About your rats in the Marsham Street area. It really is very odd. I have examined several specimens that young Bates, your "Rodent Officer," has trapped or poisoned and these include not only our old pals Rattus Rattus and R. Norvegicus but Phlœomys, Uromys, Crateromys, Bandicota (1 *only*), *Mesembriomys and Golunda. The latter hails from India. All are pretty rare over here.*

There seems to be no pet dealer or brother naturalist in the area. I do not understand it at all.

The times of sudden infestation are interesting too. Early November, March, and late May seem to be the principal dates. This doesn't coincide with any cycle I know of, but I feel it ought to suggest something since it has been repeated now for five years.

I am still poking around and shall do a paper on it for my society, but that will not help you much. Why not try an archæologist to look up underground streams, secret passages, etc.? That is the other line of inquiry.

Yours,
Anthony

P.S. You might try J. W. Winkel of the Ministry of Works, who specialises in this sort of thing. He deals with subsidences, earth movements and so on. An eccentric chap—teetotaller, unlike your Rodent Officer—but very knowledgeable. A.

To Arthur Gale from Jonathan W. Winkel

My dear Mr. Gale,

Thank you for putting me on to the problem of the rats in Marsham Street and Boundary Road which I have found fascinating. I send you this account in some detail because I have been unofficially assisted by a friend, Alastair Redcar, the fifth Earl, who wishes no publicity. In any case you can put the affair into officialese, (omitting his Lordship) if you think fit. You are welcome to that side of the problem: I await the results with pleasure.

These are the facts. Firstly, there is no map of any age that suggests an underground stream, and geologically it is most improbable. The present houses are the first ever built on this ground, which was open country of no significance prior to 1890. Underground passages are therefore also ruled out.

Rats as a community only move from A to B when there is a cause for migration. The rebuilding of the Bank of England for example in 1930 and the sewage changes in the city at that time is a case in point. Here there is no such cause.

We therefore decided to do some research on the ground itself, taking your ratcatcher Bates with us. By the way, what an odd job for a man of his education: he seems to enjoy it as if he were out for a day's hunting.

The focal point of the trouble he had thought at first was the row of shops, the fishmonger's naturally being the most suspect. He has by now dismissed this theory, and exonerated the grocer at the same time. We examined certain rat-routes between houses, all of which had been very expertly blocked.

Redcar, however, was fascinated by Rampole's Miniature Theatre Shop and, though Bates and I went all over the area, he was not to be shifted from this bright little junk hole. It seems that the place has a fair reputation among highbrows, specialising in Toy Theatres, puppets and Victorian toys, marbles, tops, skipping ropes, and so forth. Many of these are still in demand among the children of the neighbourhood.

In nosing around, Redcar unearthed the first clue, for he appears to have hit it off very well with old Rampole, who is a character and the last of a long line of toy theatre people. Asked when his slack seasons were, he said, "Well, the middle of term-time, of course. My younger customers are short of pocket money then and they feel the pinch. So do I."

The middle of term, you see. Mid-November, mid-May and the end of May.

Redcar asked what he did about it and Rampole—he really looks like the Wandering Jew in person—laughed and said, "I have a little remedy. Come back at half-past four, when the schools are closed for the day and I'll show you."

When the hour arrived, Redcar stood in the shop and watched. Rampole, it seems, has a private toy of his own, a remarkable curio. It is an old-fashioned musical box, not the tinkling cylinder variety, but the sort that gives out a species of organ music, rather like a minute fairground steam hurdy-gurdy. It plays two little tunes, one after the other, both very gay but difficult to remember, save that one is naive and the other sophisticated. They are repeated over and over again until the machine runs down.

The effect, which I have now observed for myself, is truly amazing. Within thirty seconds there were half a dozen children pressing against the window and before the performance was over the street was moderately full of young demons shouting and playing all over the place.

Several of them came inside rather sheepishly to listen and Rampole made a couple of sales: some marbles and a penny whistle, which now costs one and sixpence.

What is more extraordinary is the fact that whilst we watched

three large black rats also scuttled across the floor, *having come in by the door.* The place is full of puppets and curios and the vermin disappeared like shadows.

If you do not believe me, go and check it for yourself. Redcar says they did a dance at the back of the shop but I didn't see it. The antique instrument I must add, (though you may have reached this conclusion for yourself by now) bears the label: *Speilman. Mfr. Hamelin, Brunswick.*

If you have your well thumbed copy of Browning to hand, it may refresh your memory.

Rampole tells me he doesn't use what he calls his Pied Piper tunes very often, since the instrument is old and rickety: he only has recourse to it when business is bad.

Thank you again for putting me on to this interesting inquiry. I don't see what your department can do about it, but I have found my adventure most stimulating.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Winkel

To Arthur Gale from Edwin Rampole

Sir, Reference your inquiry re miniature German pipe-organ. I acquired this some years ago on the continent and I know of no law to prevent me from playing it. Many of my customers have expressed pleasure and I do not see on what grounds it can be called a nuisance. It is certainly not for sale to you or anybody else. Only last week Lord Redcar, who was sent to this shop by your department, or so he tells me, made me a very handsome offer for it, which I refused.

His Lordship did, however, with my permission, take a tape recording of the melodies and this, I understand, he intends marketing in the form of a gramophone record. If you want a copy it will be up to you to buy one, price will include a small royalty to this firm.

Thanking you in advance,
Yours respectfully,

Edwin Rampole
Prop. Rampole's Toy Theatres Limited

From
The Ministry of Health to the Dept. of Sanitation and Hygiene, N.W. Zone, London

The Minister will receive the Chief Inspector concerned tomorrow, at 9.30 *a.m. sharp.*

© Youngman Carter 1964

**He behaved impeccably—
but then he fell in love**

LORD OF LIFE

BY GERALD SPARROW

OF ALL the patrons of astrology in Siam, the most distinguished was undoubtedly His Royal Highness Prince Sutrawongse, for although, with the rise of the army to political power in Siam, the prince was no longer Minister of the Interior, yet he was a grandson of the legendary King Mongkut, who had spent the first forty years of his life in a monastery, lest his brother the king should think he had any ideas of usurping the throne. This long period of chastity that King Mongkut endured made him exceptionally virile when, at last, his brother died of an attack of lom, a disbalance of the ingrediénts of water, fire, blood and wind that make up the human body.

Recent plays and writing would suggest that King Mongkut was preoccupied in combating the strong will and foreign ways of Mrs. Anna Leonowens, the governess to the royal children, but, in fact, he was not. In his meticulously kept diary, covering the years of his reign, he refers to the formidable Englishwoman only once with the entry: *Mem was a great nuisance today.*

No—King Mongkut was too busy with his large and lovely harem, and the problem of how to give Siam what we should call a modern image. "We must be scientific," was one of the king's slogans; and his courtiers, seated before him on the polished teak floors, tried to look as scientific as they could to comply with the royal will.

I suppose Prince Sutrawongse inherited his virility from the old king. He did not go to a monastery, but he did go to an English public school, which is more or less the same thing. And after Winchester, he passed on to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, so that by the time he was twenty-one his sexual strength had not been drained away by over-indulgence, as it would have been had he been educated in Siam. He was a healthy, strong, cheerful young man, with charming manners and a royal carriage.

In Britain he behaved impeccably, except that in his last year

at Cambridge he fell in love with a young lady who served in a bookshop in Petty Cury. When the Siamese ambassador in London heard that Prince Sutrawongse was even considering marrying this young lady—her name was Doris Green—he wrote to the Lord of Life in Bangkok:

To His Supreme Majesty KING VACHIRAVUDYA, Lord of the Nine Parasols, Arbiter of the Tide, Lord of Life, Protector and Teacher of the Thai People, Lord of the Siamese Lands in every direction, et cetera, from his humble Ambassador at the Court of St. James's.

My Lord,

Beneath whose feet I kneel. I beg to inform your Majesty that the Prince Sutrawongse, who has shown princely promise in every respect during his sojourn in this kingdom, is now proposing to marry an unroyal girl of the lower classes, namely, a Miss Doris Green, who is employed as a servant in a bookshop in the town of Cambridge, where His Royal Highness is completing his studies.

I have presumed to call on His Royal Highness and to explain to him that it is not necessary to marry such persons, and moreover, is unsuitable. But His Royal Highness was brief with me, and sent me back to London without giving any assurance as to his intentions.

In the circumstance I humbly suggest that the only way in which an unfortunate misalliance can be avoided is by Your Majesty sending your Royal Word directly to His Royal Highness, forbidding this marriage in the strongest terms.

Begging Your Majesty to sprinkle dust on my head, and assuring your Majesty that I am at all times proud to be your Servant and receive your Commands, I am, Sire,

CHALERM PANYATUK
Ambassador for Siam in Great Britain

The king duly received this letter, and he acted. He sent a letter to Sutrawongse in the Thai diplomatic bag. The letter was short, but there was no doubt at all as to its meaning.

A Command from His Majesty THE KING OF SIAM.

Sutrawongse,

You shall not marry the servant girl Doris Green.

VACHIRAVUDYA R.

That, in the ordinary way, would have been that. But Prince Sutrawongse, after he had sent the ambassador packing, had

anticipated exactly what course events would take. He calculated that he had two months before he could receive a royal command forbidding the marriage. Meanwhile he took two steps. He made the dark, hot little girl, who had taken his fancy, pregnant. And he married her secretly at Grantchester, where the ceremony was unlikely to cause newspaper comment.

King Vachiravudya never forgave him, and Sutrawongse was given a job teaching at the university on his return to Bangkok. This, of course, was a sure sign of the royal displeasure. Doris, who was referred to by the Siamese as *Mom*—Princess, but not Royal Highness, turned out to be a girl of character, and she ran the Prince's little house like clockwork.

Soon King Vachiravudya died, partly because the Siamese doctors were afraid of being charged with treason if they touched the royal person to operate on him.

Then Prachdipok, an old Etonian, became king, and he made Sutrawongse Minister of the Interior and head of the police. He liked and trusted Sutrawongse; and, oddly enough, he approved of Mom Doris—"She is a good wife, and it is not her fault that she is not a Siamese." So overnight everything changed for Sutrawongse and Doris. The little teak house was replaced by a teak-and-gold palace, with a garden of alabaster statues and lily ponds. The prince's old horse-carriage gave way to a new Humber motor-car that the Ministry provided.

Sutrawongse and Doris, who had been "out," were "in." Socially, officially, financially, Prince Sutrawongse was now a great man, a favourite of His Majesty, holder of high office, a power in the kingdom.

During his lean years his marriage to Doris had more than justified itself. She had learnt enough Siamese to make herself understood; she kept their house as clean as a new whistle in the way her mother, a farmer's daughter, had taught her. Even the Siamese royalty had to admit that Mom Doris was that rare person in Siam, a woman who kept her word, did not gossip, and spoke nicely of her friends behind their backs. She became respected.

Of course, with the great move, it was no longer necessary for Doris to do the housework herself. She had twenty smiling, genuflecting, lazy servants to do it for her. But she still insisted on looking after the wardrobe of her husband, to see that his white jackets, his bule panung, his white stockings and shoes and his Thai silk handkerchiefs were ready for him each morning at ten, which was the hour for the Humber—with two chauffeurs—to call for the Minister.

Sutrawongse loved his new life. He found his Ministry congenial. All kinds of problems cropped up: the deportation of a young foreigner suspected of having had intercourse with a princess; the remission of sentences on His Majesty's birthday... There was never an idle moment. He enjoyed the weekly meetings under the King at the royal palace that started at five o'clock and continued until all the state business of Siam for that week was concluded, often ending with supper around midnight in the palace gardens; the King sitting at the head of the table surrounded by his ministers, and being fanned in the rhythm reserved for the Lord of Siam by two retainers, who moved their peacock fans with grace and dexterity.

It was a good life, busy but enjoyable; the path always made smooth, the faces always smiling, the portents always propitious. This was perhaps most true when the Minister went on his periodic tours of inspection. In Bangkok, great though he was, there were always the other ministers, and there was the king himself to overawe all his subjects; but when the Minister of the Interior went on inspection in the provinces the local officials and people made it clear that here was a Son of Heaven who had descended upon them, and they sank, gratefully, to their knees, raising their hands, palm to palm, to their foreheads in supplication and veneration.

Best of all, Sutrawongse enjoyed travelling by the Ministerial launch up the Menam river to Ayuthia, Paknampoh and beyond, for in this way he could visit the towns and villages in the great central valley of Siam, and spend his days steaming leisurely along, undisturbed, at peace, playing poker with his entourage, or just sleeping—a wonderful escape from the duties and protocol of Bangkok.

On these trips, as he lay in his cabin listening to the chuffing of the engine and the lapping of the water, he often thought of Doris. What a romance that had been! It had turned out wonderfully, really. She had given him four children: Royal Angel, the eldest boy, now at Winchester, where he was known as Stinks; White Lily, engaged to a Serene Highness in the Foreign Office; and little Daeng, the baby, who was adorable. Of course, there had been Gossamer Jade as well. She had been a mistake. At seventeen, she had run away with a Portuguese acrobat who was appearing in a circus in Bangkok. Gossamer Jade was deprived of her royal rights and privileges, but she did not seem to care, being devoted to her Piedro, her acrobatic spouse, and having become apparently a real woman of the Big Top.

Ah well, one cannot expect all one's children to run to order. After all, Doris had been a winner against the form book. Sometimes it was that way.

Sutrawongse had never considered taking a mea noi, a little wife, until the day the Ministerial launch stopped at the old capital of Ayuthia, and he sent for the governor to come to report to him on board.

Bring your family, too, and we can have supper here, it is cooler, Sutrawongse wrote in his message of greeting.

The governor, Luang Petra, turned up on time with his wife and daughter. Pitsawongse, the daughter, was seventeen and had just returned from five years in Britain, where she had learnt to speak impeccable English, to appreciate literature, to dress with much discrimination, to dance and to kiss in the unrestrained foreign fashion. Sutrawongse fell in love with her there and then.

It was not an easy matter to arrange, for the family was respectable, the father was a governor, the girl was so young. But it was arranged. Pitsawongse was set up in a neat little house in the suburb of Bangkapi, where Sutrawongse could visit her daily after he left the Ministry, and before he returned to Doris.

Pitsawongse was not a mistress. She was a mea noi. That is to say, any children she might have by Sutrawongse would be

legitimate, for the concept of illegitimacy did not exist in Siam, and although these days only one marriage could be registered, that of the mea luang, or chief wife, the institution of the mea noi was sanctioned by social custom and usage. Siam was legally monogamous, but actually mildly polygamous; thus having the best of both worlds.

Doris heard about Pitsawongse soon after the girl had come to Bangkok. She had been expecting this to happen for years, and had been surprised that Sutrawongse had now been a minister for seven years and had never taken a mea noi. But now it had happened, and Doris resented it, but she was far too clever to allow her resentment to show. She knew that her husband still loved her, would always keep her in his palace, and perhaps even needed this adulterous prop to his marriage, for he was getting older, and time slipped by in the warm nights and warmer days of "the Abode of the Angels."

Pitsawongse plunged into her first love affair. She used all her wiles—and they were not few—to sweep Sutrawongse off his feet, so that he would pension off Doris, and make Pitsawongse a royal highness, which Doris could not be. She had a natural flair for loving, and her turbulent challenge even reminded Sutrawongse of Doris when first he had met her. He nearly did what Pitsawongse wanted, but not quite. He knew he was mad about this girl, but his love for Doris was never killed. He told Pitsawongse that he had decided to keep Mom as his official wife.

"In the palace?"

"In the palace."

"And what about me and my son?"

"I will always love you both . . ."

Pitsawongse flushed, then she cried. She had been so sure that she could steal him, and now it was not to be. However, she had her son. He was a prince's son. He was also the finest child that she had ever seen.

Sutrawongse said: "He has the looks of a Buddha, so smiling and wise is he." They were both devoted to the baby. Nothing was too good for him.

Sutrawongse first took up astrology at the instigation of his cousin, the scholarly Prince Dela. He found it an amusing distraction from his official and private life, from the Ministry and Doris and Pitsawongse. When he shut himself up in his room and studied the stars, it was like escaping into another world. He drew a horoscope for Doris and one for Pitsawongse. They were both favourable.

Then, not without apprehension, he cast his own horoscope. He was not convinced that astrology was true but, equally, he was not sure that it was not. Born on the 22nd day of January, at five minutes past three in the morning, in the Wang Na palace of his father, he collected the data for his own character, fortune and future.

It turned out quite well. There was only one black spot. The fifth house, that of the children, showed an unusual and turbulent juxtaposition of planets and stars—it was a bad omen. Something sinister, it seemed, was in store for the children. He tried to banish the whole thing from his mind; but could not do so. When trouble did come the horoscope flashed back into his mind, and instinctively, blindly, without reasoning, he attributed his misfortune to the prophecy he had himself invoked.

It was nearly a year after Sutrawongse had made up his mind not to break up his marriage that tragedy happened. Pitsawongse's son, now nearly two, was kidnapped. It was a great sensation. For the son of the Minister of the Interior and head of the police to be stolen and held to ransom was unheard of.

Sutrawongse was distracted and torn in two directions by the news. The policeman in him made him want to trap the perpetrators of the crime by an ambush, or by marked notes in the ransom money, but as a father he merely wanted his wonderful child back. The under-secretary worked out an excellent plan to trap the kidnappers. But at that moment Pitsawongse received a strand of her baby's hair, dark and gleaming, with a fearful note that said:

Do not be foolish. Pay now. Next time we cut deeper.

It was too much for Sutrawongse. He paid up a hundred thousand ticals, about ten thousand pounds sterling, in unmarked notes, leaving the money to be collected, without an ambush, at the spot over the river by the Temple of the Dawn that the kidnappers had indicated.

Next day the child was safely back in its mother's arms.

Throughout this harrowing week Doris said not a word. But when it was all over she spoke to her husband in Siamese and said, "You are satisfied, My Lord?"

"Satisfied? What do you mean?"

"Satisfied the child was really stolen?"

"Of course. What else?"

"Nothing. I am glad for your sake that the baby is back unharmed."

And Sutrawongse came over to his wife and kissed her . . .

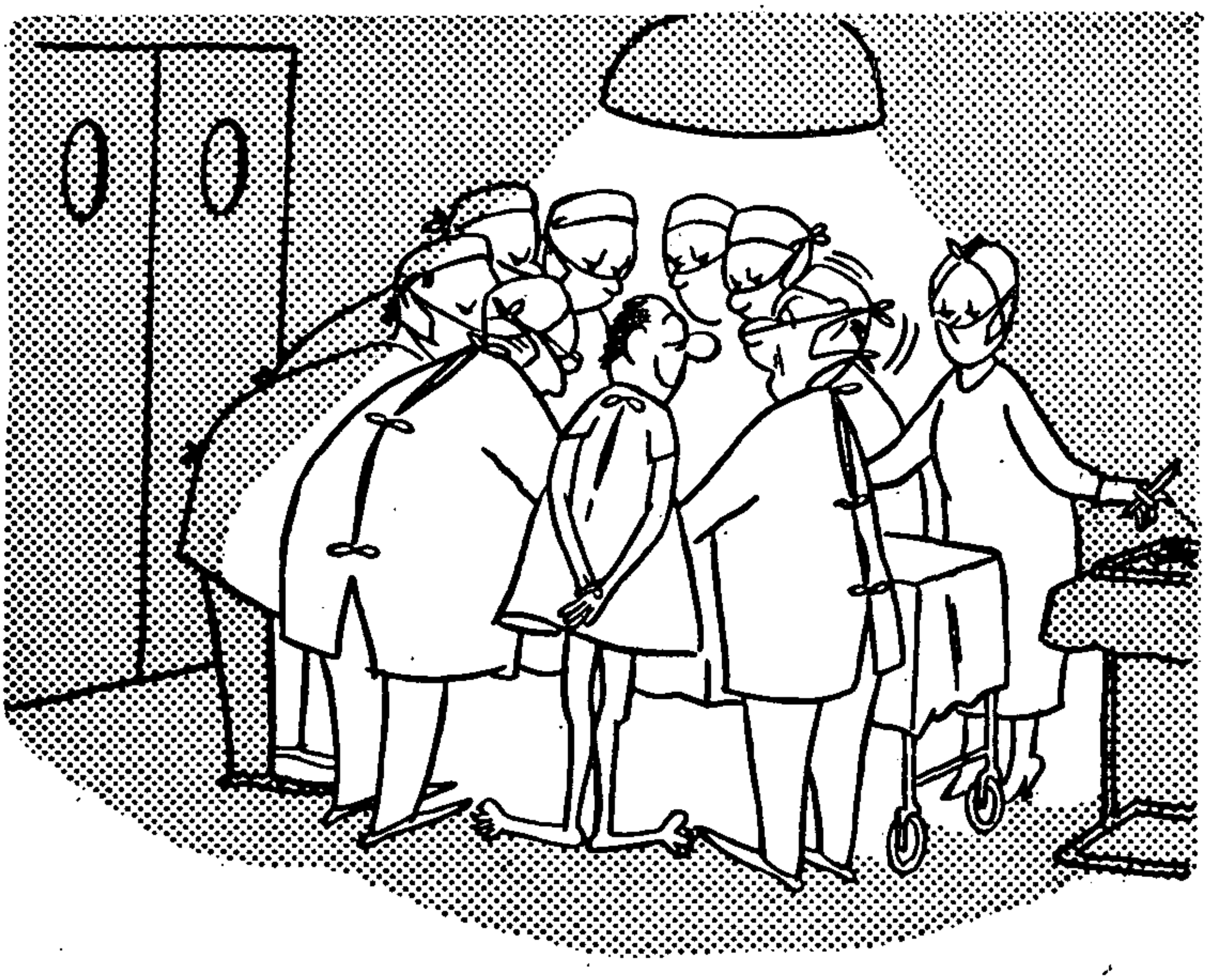
Two winters later Sutrawongse caught a chill, developed pneumonia, and died.

Mom Doris was left his palace and all his property, except the little house that her husband had bought for Pitsawongse. But Pitsawongse, unexpectedly, bought ten rais of land on the road to Sriraja and built herself a villa on the land. It was said to have cost her a hundred thousand ticals. Then she married a royal highness and achieved the rank she had always wanted.

Of the two women it was Mom Doris who was the happier. It was by the sheerest accident that, winding up her estate as a lawyer, I came across her diary. I turned the pages idly back to that critical week when her husband's son by Pitsawongse had been kidnapped. Then I read, "The Prince does not know it, but the girl has placed the child with an old ayah at Hua Hin by the sea. It is in no danger. I shall say nothing. The girl can have the money and I shall have my husband."

Doris Green, of Cambridge, England, had learnt some of the wisdom of the East.

© Gerald Sparrow 1964



" Now stop this nonsense, Mr. Fulvy, and get back on the table! "

Traveller's Joy

A cannon having been fired as a preparatory signal, Mr. Lunardi, having embraced his friends, and all matters being adjusted, a second cannon was fired as the signal of ascension. Insensible must that heart be which did not feel itself anxious and interested at that moment for the fate of him who intrepidly stepped into his seat, and Phaeton-like, seized the reins which were to guide the chariot of the sun.

About five minutes after two o'clock the machine was launched; and as if dreading the course it had to run, and unwilling to proceed, after having mounted about twelve yards, it reclined to its native earth; but roused by ambition and the spirit of philosophical researches, Mr. Lunardi rebuked its fear, and gave its swiftness to its airy flight.

The Morning Post, 16 *September*, 1784

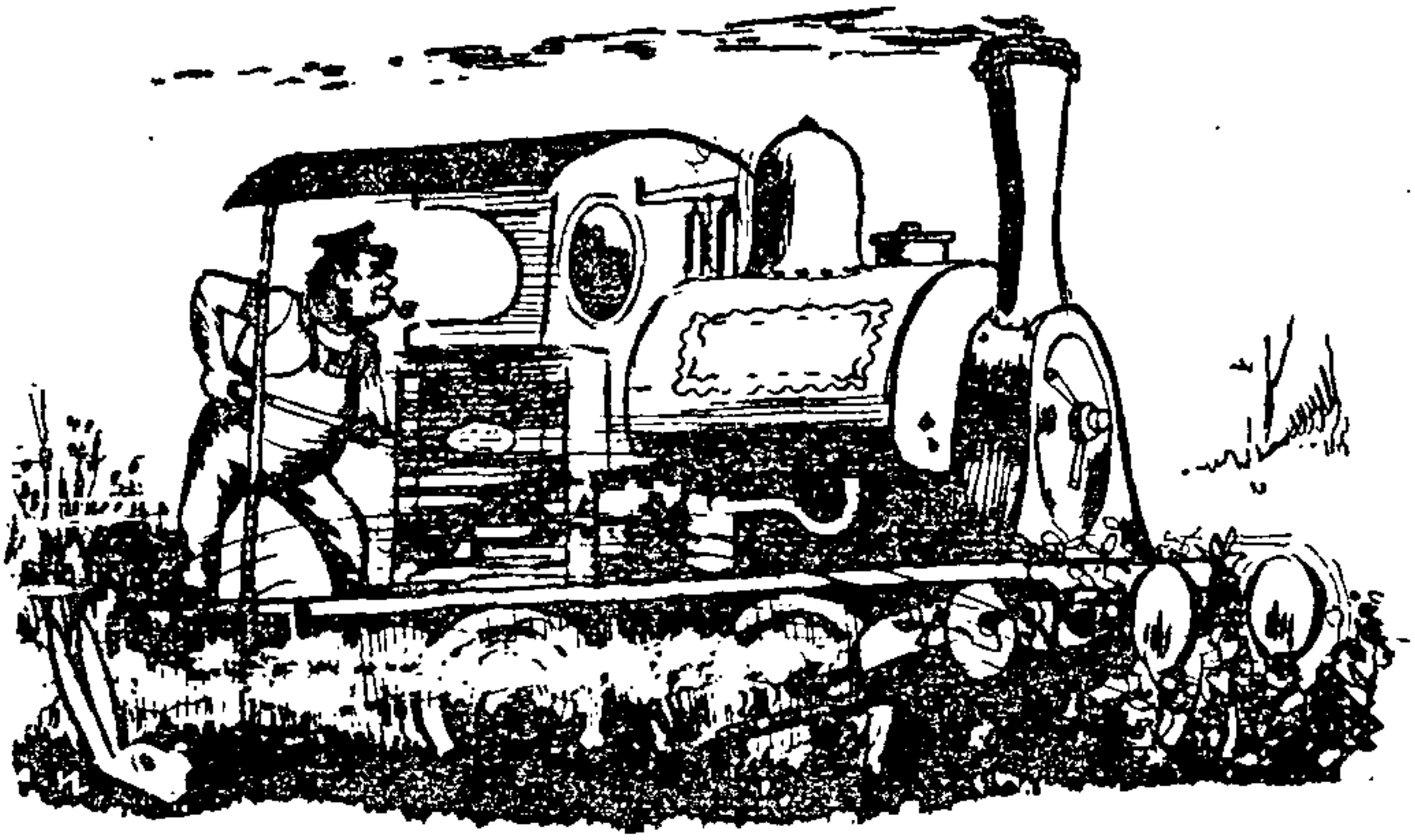
The Immigrant

When Ruth was old
She'd take her children's children on her knee.
They never wearied to be told
Tales of her girlhood in a far country.
For though her eyes grew dim,
Men said of her, " Her heart is always young,"
And Boaz, while she spoke to him,
Loved the faint accent of a foreign tongue.

FRANK KENDON

Easy Flemish

GUEST: God be here, dame! May I have a bed here?
HOSTESS: Yea, even though were ye twelve, all on horseback.
GUEST: Nay, but we three. Is there to eat here within?
HOSTESS: Yea, enough, God be thanked.
GUEST: Bring it to us. Give hay to the horses, and straw them well . . . Dame, what owe we?
HOSTESS: We shall reckon tomorrow.
GUEST: Bring us to sleep; we been merry.
HOSTESS: Well, I go. Janet, light the candle, and bear them hot water for to wash their feet; and cover them with cushions. *Translated from a Flemish Phrase-book by* WILLIAM CAXTON, c. 1450



Traveller's Curse after Mïsdirection

May they stumble, stage by stage
On an endless pilgrimage,
Dawn and dusk, mile after mile,
At each and every step, a stile;
At each and every step withal
May they catch their feet and fall;
At each and every fall they take
May a bone within them break;
And may the bone that breaks within
Not be, for variation's sake,
Now rib, now thigh, now arm, now shin,
But always, without fail THE NECK

ROBERT GRAVES
(*from the Welsh*)

Unspeakable

Left for Croze by the eight o'clock express. A very fast journey as far as Argenton but, from there onwards, every kind of misadventure. When I arrived at Argenton I stood over my luggage for an hour in the mud and pouring rain before getting into a dreadful little conveyance, in which I had an unspeakable journey between a child that constantly relieved itself and three women who were sick.

I went on to Limoges, but was almost tempted to turn back and go home again, inventing the best excuse I could think of.

EUGENE DELACROIX, *Journal*, 10 *September*, 1855

Fresh Fields

Every time-travelling field of presentation is contained within a field one dimension larger, travelling in another dimension of Time, the larger field covering events which are "past" and "future," as well as "present," to the smaller field . . .

The serialism of the fields of presentation involves the existence of a serial observer. In this respect every time-travelling field is the field apparent to a similarly travelling and similarly dimensioned observer. Observation by any such observer is observation by all observers pertaining to the dimensionally larger fields.

J. W. DUNNE,
An Experiment With Time

Welcome

Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Engraved on the Statue of Liberty,
at the entrance to New York harbour

Falmouth

The town contains many Quakers and salt fish—the oysters have a taste of copper, owing to the soil of a mining country—the women (blessed be the Corporation therefor!) are flogged at the cart's tail when they pick and steal, as happened to one of the fair sex yesterday noon. She was pertinacious in her behaviour, and damned the mayor.

This is all I know of Falmouth.

LORD BYRON, *Letter to Francis Hodgson*, 1809

Journey's End

O mistress mine! where are you roaming?
O! stay and hear; your true-love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
Twelfth Night

You already know him well as an actor: now we introduce a new Robert Morley, making his debut on the stage of Argosy with his wryly amusing first story—

MRS. SALE'S MOUNTAIN

BY ROBERT MORLEY

IT HAD always been Mrs. Tom Sale's ambition to move a mountain. When at the age of seven she had first read that this feat was possible, she had shut her Bible, closed her eyes, said a small prayer to the Almighty asking Him to give her a grain of faith the size of a mustard seed, and walked purposefully out of the garden gate and up the hill which overlooked the little town where she lived. Having reached the top she sat down on the grass, closed her eyes, and speaking firmly but quietly—for she was a polite little girl—said, "Please, Mountain, remove hence to yonder place."

When she opened her eyes she was extremely disappointed to find the hill hadn't moved. She said another prayer and tried again. This time she stood and pointed in the direction in which she wished to travel; she also dropped the word please, thinking perhaps she had better keep to the exact form of words advised by St. Matthew in Chapter XVII of his Gospel. This time she distinctly detected a tremor of the ground on which she stood, accompanied by a slight rustling sound. When she opened her eyes it seemed to her the village had come closer.

Pleased but by no means surprised at the success of her efforts, she repeated the experiment a good many times before it grew dark and it was time to return to the nursery. She didn't mention her achievement to any of the grown-ups, who might have accused her of boasting on this occasion. After all, she had only been able to move the hill a small distance and her claim to have

done so at all might be disputed by her father, who never seemed to believe anything she told him. Far better to wait a little and store up enough faith for a more spectacular effort. How surprised everyone would be when they woke up one fine morning and found the hill had gone altogether . . . to China perhaps, or Peru. She decided that perhaps it would be safer not to be on the hill at all when this happened and that in future she would give the word of command from her bedroom window after she had been tucked up by Nannie.

But that evening, though she knelt and prayed and ordered the hill to start on its journey, it stayed exactly where it was. Obviously something had gone wrong. It must be that she had already spent her faith that afternoon and she would have to wait until she had stored up some more. There was as usual, she told herself, a catch; as much faith as a grain of mustard seed might take quite a long time to acquire.

She waited a whole week before making another attempt; during that time she prayed a good deal and converted a string of seed pearls, which her mother had given her on her birthday, into a rosary to help her concentrate.

"For heaven's sake, stop fidgeting with your necklace, Miss Emma," her nurse told her, "and find something to do. How about getting out your painting book?"

"I have something to do, thank you," replied the child. "Only it's a secret."

Try as they would, they could never get the secret out of her. Something told her that if she ever discussed her plan with anyone it was doomed and she would never again achieve the success which had accompanied her first wonderful experiment. For the mountain had moved, she was convinced, and she was convinced too that some day somewhere she would move another.

As Emma grew up, so she grew increasingly patient. She hoarded her faith and waited for the day when she would have enough of it to do what she meant to do. She kept the necklace always by her and when curious people asked her why she spent so much time running the beads through her fingers, she would answer that it was just a nervous habit she had acquired and that she believed they brought her luck.

When she married Tom she thought it best to explain to him straight away that she always said her prayers with the beads because it helped her to concentrate, and he smiled gently and told her to carry on. It was the only secret she ever kept from him during the twenty happy years of her marriage. All her friends had warned her that Tom was marrying her for her money and she was foolish to accept his proposal, but she only smiled and went quietly ahead with the wedding arrangements. She knew it was true about the money; her parents had died leaving her a rich woman and she had no illusions about her suitor; she knew him for what he was, a charming gigolo, on whose devotion and even affection she could count as long as the money lasted, and she took care to see that it was wisely invested and never passed out of her possession. Tom never passed out of her possession either, and in time he came to love her almost as much as the freedom and luxury with which she provided him.

They lived a placid conventional life, in a placid conventional house not far from the Kent coast. They were a popular couple and the same friends who had predicted disaster filled their home at weekends, drinking Tom's excellent wines and congratulating Emma on the happiness he had brought her. On Sunday afternoons in the summer they gave large tennis parties, which Tom

organised so that even the duffers enjoyed themselves, and those who prided themselves on their game looked forward all through the week to their chance to shine on the magnificently kept-up tennis courts. " Better than Wimbledon " was the verdict of one international star who came down one Sunday and sat afterwards drinking tea under the great cedar tree. Emma didn't play tennis herself, she sat pouring innumerable cups of tea, large ones for the gentlemen, smaller for the ladies, which were handed round with the sandwiches and the plum cake by the children. It was always other people's children, alas, for they had none of their own. But Emma was content.

She wondered sometimes, as she watched Tom moving from group to group arranging who should play with whom and on which court, whether, if she died before he did, he would marry one of those tall leggy girls who so obviously adored him and have sons and daughters of his own. Although he was the same age as herself, he looked at least ten years younger and took great care of his health and figure. Tom took care of everything, except the money. By now he had become so much a part of herself that she would have been willing to let him have the keeping of that too, but when she had once suggested that he might like to be her trustee, he had pointed out to her that he was the last person to take on the task.

" Once I got my hands on it, I should probably gamble it all away or leave you and go and live in South America with one of those film stars," he told her.

" My darling," she had replied, " any time you want to go and live with a film star in South America or anywhere else, you only have to tell me."

He laughed and took out his diary, and when she asked what he'd written he told her he'd made a note of what she had said to see him through difficult days. " You know I only married you for your money," he went on, " and that's the only reason I'm still here."

But when the war came, he volunteered on the first day as an ordinary seaman and she knew, as he lay by her side in the great double bed and made foolish love to her after too much champagne the evening before he had to leave her, that it was not the house or the tennis parties or the money, or even the country that mattered to him any more, but only her. Just before he fell asleep she asked him why, since he was such a poor sailor, he had chosen the Navy.

" Because I think," he had replied, " it will be the safest place."

She stayed awake all night holding her beads, bargaining her

faith with God. All that I have, she told herself, is surely enough by now, if not to move a mountain, at least to keep my lover safe. Grant that, oh Lord, and I will never ask for anything foolish again . . . I will never ask for anything again.

In the days that followed she never relaxed her prayers, spending long hours in the great house on her knees beside the bed, praying that Tom might live. If her friends noticed a change in her, that she seemed unusually silent and reserved when they met, they had no reason to complain of the way she carried out her new responsibilities. She worked tirelessly at the local canteen and filled her house with evacuees. Only when Tom was home on leave, a lieutenant by now with a tank landing craft, which he professed to adore, did she come to life and invite their friends to sit again under the cedar on Sunday afternoons. They found life went on, on those occasions, much as it had before the war. The old butler still brought out trays of delicious things to eat and they marvelled at the excellence and unchanged content of the plum cake.

One Sunday, when the party had been smaller than usual—partly because she had only received the telegram announcing Tom's homecoming a few hours before and hadn't had much time to make the arrangements, and partly because all but one of the tennis courts were planted with potatoes and greenstuff—one of the guests had started to talk about the Dieppe Raid, news of which had just been released. She couldn't remember exactly what he had said but when one of the others round the table joined in, giving his views on the wisdom of having such operations, she noticed Tom was unusually silent. When someone asked his opinion, as the only one who probably knew what he was talking about, he smiled and refused to be drawn.

It was then that the stockbroker who had started the discussion spoke. " Whether any of us knows what we're talking about or not, we can only go by the papers . . . on the face of it, it was a bit of a flop."

Tom started to say something, then thought better of it and, getting up, walked over the lawn and disappeared into the house.

In the ensuing silence, the stockbroker apologised . . . " I'm sorry I said that . . . I hope I didn't upset your husband." He looked at Emma questioningly. " One really oughtn't to speak like that . . . careless talk."

" No, I don't think so," Emma told him, " I expect Tom has gone to fetch something." And so it proved, for Tom came back after a time, carrying a tray of drinks.

The stockbroker got up to help him. "I hope I didn't upset you, calling Dieppe a flop," he said again.

But Tom only smiled and poured out the whisky. "Why, of course not," he replied, holding out a glass . . . "after all, it *was* a flop."

Afterwards, when they were sitting alone, after the splendid dinner which cook had miraculously contrived, she said, "You were at Dieppe, weren't you?"

"Yes," he told her.

"Why did you go into the house—did you want to hit that fat man?"

"No, I didn't want to hit him; to tell you the truth, I went into the house to be sick."

Later he told her about the raid . . . how they had been in the second party who had been supposed to go in later when the big guns were silenced and how, as they lay anchored off the coast, some of his men had asked his permission to bathe. He had seen good reason why they shouldn't. And suddenly, as they splashed around in the blue-green sea, they were joined by the corpses of the men who had arrived before them. "That was the end of the Flop," he said . . . "After that we waited around for a time and then came home."

It was the last time Tom ever came home. He was lost at sea a few weeks later. Somewhere off Crete, they told her. Mrs. Sale put away her beads. She continued to live in the house where she had once been happy, and after the war was over and the evacuees had departed and the tennis lawns had been resown, she sat under the cedar on Sundays, pouring tea into large cups for the gentlemen and smaller ones for the ladies while her butler and other people's children handed round the plum cake.

Slowly the pace around her slackened and the perfection on which Tom had once insisted was replaced with second and third best. The plum cake was no longer remarkable or even home-made; guests who stayed with her were no longer enchanted or satisfied with the care which they received. The silver lost its polish, the food its flavour, the house was often cold, because no one had bothered to light the fires. The servants became more and more careless, and the widow less and less demanding.

Emma seemed unconscious of the changed atmosphere, and if she objected to the half-cold food and the slovenliness around her she gave no sign. Her friends concluded that she had lost a good deal of money—for there seemed no other reason to account for the shabby sofas and the sagging chairs, the general air of neglect—and quietly cut short their visits or refused invitations

altogether. If Emma couldn't afford to entertain them properly it was obviously a kindness not to inflict themselves upon her at all.

Every year Emma closed up the house for two months in the spring and went abroad. She shunned the places which Tom and she had visited together and chose instead small continental spas, where the drab hotels were full of listless middle-aged women like herself, in search of a cure for their rheumatism or simply trying to economise. Emma had no rheumatism to cure and no need to economise. All she needed was to forget she had once been happy, so that life might become more bearable.

One spring on the night before she was leaving the house, she opened a drawer in her desk hoping to find some labels and found, underneath the forgotten souvenirs and rubbish with which it was filled, a small packet wrapped in tissue paper. She undid the thin red string with which it was secured and held once again between her fingers the rope of seed pearls. She had long since forgotten that this was the place she had hidden them and she was surprised by the pleasure their recovery brought her. She felt a sense of relief and excitement and that night slept with them beneath her pillow. The next morning she placed them carefully in her handbag beside the passport and the travellers' cheques. When she reached the airport, she went to the desk and changed her flight ticket for a plane bound for Crete.

It was late when she reached her destination, a little hotel in a village on the coast. The driver of her taxi had been mildly surprised when his fare indicated that this was where she had decided to stop the night; it was not the sort of hotel where the tourists usually put up.

Mrs. Sale had been as surprised as he by her sudden decision to stop the car—she had been quite undecided about her destination. Something told her that this was the place she had been seeking, and she got out and paid the taxi and was shown to the best bedroom by the delighted proprietor, who hoped from the quantity of the luggage she had brought that she was there, if not for life, at least for several months.

He was to be disappointed, but Mrs. Sale, when she awoke early the next morning, was not disappointed at all. She ate the rusks and honey and drank the dreadful coffee, and then left the hotel and walked up the steep path which wound into the hills overlooking the bay. After a time she stopped walking and sat down on a rock and for the first time, because it had been dark when she she arrived, looked at her husband's grave. Somewhere beneath

the blue water, deep, deep down on the bed of the Mediterranean, Tom had been before her. Soon, she told herself, she would be with him again.

She took the beads from her bag and shut her eyes. "Dear God," she said out loud, "let me see him soon." She waited for the noise of the rushing wind but it never came. It hasn't worked, she told herself, dear God, it hasn't worked. She stood up and looked around her. Nothing moved, the sun shone down from the blue sky. Surely, she thought, I ought to know before I do this thing . . . I must be sure. She turned her eyes from the sea and faced the mountain which rose steeply a thousand feet above her. She stretched out her hand, clenching the beads with all her strength.

"Mountain," she commanded, shouting the words as loudly as she could, "Mountain, remove hence to yonder place."

It's doubtful if Emma had ever heard herself speak quite so loudly, doubtful indeed if she heard herself on this occasion. The human voice, however powerful, is no match for the noise made when a mountain topples . . .

They never found Emma's body—there was no reason to look for it. For days, those that were left were kept busy, digging for any possible survivors in the ruins of the village below. They forgot about the gentle English lady who had walked in the hills on that terrible morning.

So Mrs. Emma Sale still lies quietly under the rocks quite unconscious of the havoc that a great shout or a little faith can cause.

© Robert Morley 1963

TWO OF A KIND!

A famous critic was persuaded to attend the dress rehearsal of a very serious play by a very serious young dramatist, but unfortunately slept through a greater part of the performance. The outraged dramatist chided him later, "How could you sleep when you knew how much I wanted your opinion?" The critic reminded him, "Young man, sleep *is* an opinion."

★

Somerset Maugham gravely informed the students in a drama course at London University: "A sure formula for success is to write first a tragedy in five acts. Put it away in a drawer for six months, then change it into a comedy in three acts. Forget it for another year. Then reduce it to a curtain-raiser. That done, rush right out and marry a rich American."

When did you last read Oliver Twist? We ourselves had quite forgotten the enormous power and vitality of Dickens until we visited the new Fielding's Music Hall recently. There Donald Wolfit gave a superb account of the dreadful end of Bill Sikes; enough to make the toughest murderer think twice! Here it is:

MURDERER OF NANCY

BY CHARLES DICKENS

LET no man talk of murderers escaping justice, and hint that Providence must sleep. There were twenty score of violent deaths in one long minute of that agony of fear.

For now, a vision came before Sikes, as constant and more terrible than that from which he had escaped. Those widely staring eyes, so lustreless and so glassy, that he had better borne to see them than think upon them, appeared in the midst of the darkness; light in themselves, but giving light to nothing. There were but two, but they were everywhere . . .

Near to that part of the Thames on which the church at Rotherhithe abuts, where the buildings on the banks are dirtiest and the vessels on the river blackest with the dust of colliers and the smoke of close-built, low-roofed houses, there exists the filthiest, the strangest, the most extraordinary of the many localities that are hidden in London, wholly unknown, even by name, to the great mass of its inhabitants.

Beyond Dockhead in the Borough of Southwark, stands Jacob's Island, surrounded by a muddy ditch, six or eight feet deep and fifteen or twenty wide when the tide is in; this creek or inlet from the Thames, is known as Folly Ditch.

In Jacob's Island, the warehouses are roofless and empty; the walls are crumbling down; the windows are windows no more; the doors are falling into the streets; the chimneys are blackened, but they yield no smoke. The houses have no owners; they are

broken open, and entered upon by those who have the courage; and there they live, and there they die. They must have powerful motives for a secret residence, or be reduced to a destitute condition indeed, who seek a refuge in Jacob's Island.

In the upper room of one of these houses—a detached house of fair size, ruinous in other respects, but strongly defended at door and window—of which house the back commanded the ditch in manner already described—there were assembled three men, who, regarding each other every now and then with looks expressive of perplexity and expectation, sat for some time in profound and gloomy silence. One of these was Toby Crackit, another Mr. Chitling, and the third a robber of fifty years, whose nose had been almost beaten in in some old scuffle, and whose face bore a frightful scar which might probably be traced to the same occasion. His name was Kags.

"I wish," said Toby, turning to Mr. Chitling, "that you had picked out some other crib when the two old ones got too warm, and had not come here, my fine feller."

"Why didn't you, blunder-head!" said Kags.

"Well, I thought you'd have been a little more glad to see me than this," replied Mr. Chitling, with a melancholy air.

There was a short silence, after which Toby Crackit, seeming to abandon as hopeless any further effort to maintain his usual devil-may-care swagger, turned to Chitling and said, "When was Fagin took then?"

"Just at dinner-time—two o'clock this afternoon. Charley and I made our lucky up the wash'us chimney, and Bolter got into the empty water-butt, head downwards; but his legs were so precious long that they stuck out at the top, so they took him too."

"Wot's come of young Bates?" demanded Kags.

"He hung about, not to come over here afore dark, but he'll be here soon," replied Chitling. "There's nowhere else to go."

As the men sat in silence with their eyes fixed on the floor, a pattering noise was heard upon the stairs, and Sikes' dog bounded into the room. The dog had jumped in at an open window.

"What's the meaning of this?" said Toby. "He can't be coming here. I—I—hope not."

"If he was coming here, he'd have come with the dog," said Kags, stooping down to examine the animal, who lay panting on the floor. "Here! Give us some water for him; he has run himself faint."

"He's drunk it all up, every drop," said Chitling after watching the dog some time in silence. "Covered with mud—lame—half blind—he must have come a long way."

"Where can he have come from!" exclaimed Toby. "And how comes he here alone without the other!"

"He"—none of them called the murderer by his old name.

"He can't have made away with himself. What do you think?" said Chitling.

Toby shook his head.

"If he had," said Kags, "the dog 'ud want to lead us away to where he did it. No. I think he's got out of the country, and left the dog behind. He must have given him the slip somehow, or he wouldn't be so easy."

This solution, appearing the most probable one, was adopted as the right; the dog, creeping under a chair, coiled himself to sleep, without more notice from anybody.

It being now dark, the shutter was closed, and a candle lighted and placed upon the table. The terrible events of the last two days had made a deep impression on all three, increased by the danger, and uncertainty of their own position. They drew their chairs closer together, starting at every sound. They spoke little, and that in whispers, and were as silent and awestricken as if the remains of the murdered woman lay in the next room.

They had sat thus some time, when suddenly was heard a hurried knocking at the door below.

"Young Bates," said Kags, looking angrily round, to check the fear he felt himself.

The knocking came again. No, it wasn't he. He never knocked like that.

Crackit went to the window, and shaking all over, drew in his head. There was no need to tell them who it was; his pale face was enough. The dog too was on the alert in an instant, and ran whining to the door.

"We must let him in," he said, taking up the candle.

"Isn't there any help for it?" asked the other man in a hoarse voice.

"None. He *must* come in."

"Don't leave us in the dark," said Kags, taking down a candle from the chimney-piece, and lighting it, with such a trembling hand that the knocking was twice repeated before he had finished.

Crackit went down to the door, and returned followed by a man with the lower part of his face buried in a handkerchief, and another tied over his head under his hat. He drew them slowly off. Blanched face, sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, beard of three days' growth, wasted flesh, short thick breath—it was the very ghost of Sikes.

He laid his hand upon a chair which stood in the middle of

the room, but shuddering as he was about to drop into it, and seeming to glance over his shoulder, dragged it back close to the wall—as close as it would go—ground it against it—and sat down.

Not a word had been exchanged. He looked from one to another in silence. If an eye were furtively raised and met his, it was instantly averted. When his hollow voice broke silence, they all three started. They seemed never to have heard its tones before.

"How came that dog here?" he asked.

"Alone. Three hours ago."

"Tonight's paper says that Fagin's took. Is it true, or a lie?"

"True."

They were silent again.

"Damn you all!" said Sikes, passing his hand across his forehead. "Have you nothing to say to me?"

There was an uneasy movement among them, but nobody spoke.

Sikes carried his eyes slowly up the wall behind him—rather trying to turn his head than actually doing it—and said, "Is—it—the body—is it buried?"

They shook their heads.

"Why isn't it!" he retorted with the same glance behind him. "Who's that knocking?"

Crackit intimated, by a motion of his hand as he left the room, that there was nothing to fear; and directly came back with Charley Bates behind him. Sikes sat opposite the door, so that the moment the boy entered the room he encountered his figure.

"Toby," said the boy, falling back, as Sikes turned his eyes towards him, "why didn't you tell me this, downstairs? Don't come nearer me," and, looking with horror upon the murderer's face, "You monster!"

The man stopped halfway, and they looked at each other; but Sikes' eyes sunk gradually to the ground.

"Witness you three," cried the boy, shaking his clenched fist, and becoming more and more excited as he spoke. "Witness you three—I'm not afraid of him—if they come here after him, I'll give him up; I will. I tell you out at once. He may kill me for it if he likes, but if I am here I'll give him up. I'd give him up if he was to be boiled alive. Murder! Help! If there's the pluck of a man among you three, you'll help me. Murder! Help!"

Pouring out these cries, and accompanying them with violent gesticulation, the boy actually threw himself, singlehanded, upon the strong man, and in the intensity of his energy and the suddenness of his surprise, brought him heavily to the ground.

The three spectators seemed quite stupefied. They offered no interference, and the boy and man rolled on the ground together; the former, heedless of the blows that showered upon him, wrenching his hands tighter and tighter in the garments about the murderer's breast, and never ceasing to call for help with all his might.

The contest, however, was too unequal to last long. Sikes had him down, and his knee was on his throat, when Crackit pulled him back with a look of alarm, and pointed to the window. There were lights gleaming below, voices in loud and earnest conversation, the tramp of hurried footsteps—endless they seemed in number—crossing the nearest wooden bridge. One man on horseback seemed to be among the crowd; for there was the noise of hoofs rattling on the uneven pavement. The gleam of lights increased; the footsteps came more thickly and noisily on. Then came a loud knocking at the door, and then a hoarse murmur from such a multitude of angry voices as would have made the boldest quail.

"Help!" shrieked the boy in a voice that rent the air. "He's here! Break down the door!"

"In the King's name," cried the voices without; and the hoarse cry arose again, but louder.

"Break down the door!" screamed the boy. "I tell you they'll never open it. Run straight to the room where the light is. Break down the door!"

Strokes, thick and heavy, rattled upon the door and lower window-shutters as he ceased to speak, and a loud huzzah burst from the crowd; giving the listener, for the first time, some adequate idea of its immense extent.

"Open the door of some place where I can lock this screeching Hell-babe," cried Sikes fiercely; running to and fro, and dragging the boy, now, as easily as if he were an empty sack. "That door. Quick!" He flung him in, bolted it, and turned the key. "Is the downstairs door fast?"

"Double-locked and chained," replied Crackit, who, with the other two men, still remained quite helpless and bewildered.

"The panels—are they strong?"

"Lined with sheet-iron."

"And the windows too?"

"Yes, and the windows."

"Damn you!" cried the desperate ruffian, throwing up the sash and menacing the crowd. "Do your worst! I'll cheat you yet!"

Of all the terrific yells that ever fell on mortal ears, none could

exceed the cry of the infuriated throng. Some shouted to those who were nearest to set the house on fire; others roared to the officers to shoot him dead. Among them all, none showed such fury as the man on horseback, who, throwing himself out of the saddle, and bursting through the crowd as if he were parting water, cried, beneath the window, in a voice that rose above all others, "Twenty guineas to the man who brings a ladder!"

The nearest voices took up the cry, and hundreds echoed it. Some called for ladders, some for sledge-hammers; some ran with torches to and fro as if to seek them, and still came back and roared again; some spent their breath in impotent curses and execrations; some pressed forward with the ecstasy of madmen, and thus impeded the progress of those below; some among the boldest attempted to climb up by the water-spout and crevices in the wall; and all waved to and fro, in the darkness beneath, like a field of corn moved by an angry wind: and joined from time to time in one loud furious roar.

"The tide," cried the murderer, as he staggered back into the room, and shut the faces out, "the tide was in as I came up. Give me a rope, a long rope. They're all in front. I may drop into the Folly Ditch, and clear off that way. Give me a rope, or I shall do three more murders and kill myself."

The panic-stricken men pointed to where such articles were kept; the murderer, hastily selecting the longest and strongest cord, hurried up to the house-top.

He planted a board, which he had carried up with him for the purpose, so firmly against the door that it must be a matter of great difficulty to open it from the inside; and creeping over the tiles, looked over the low parapet.

The water was out, and the ditch a bed of mud.

The crowd had been hushed during these few moments, watching his motions and doubtful of his purpose, but the instant they perceived it and knew it was defeated, they raised a cry of triumphant execration to which all their previous shouting had been whispers. Again and again it rose. Those who were at too great a distance to know its meaning, took up the sound; it echoed and re-echoed; it seemed as though the whole city had poured its population out to curse him.

The man had shrunk down, thoroughly quelled by the ferocity of the crowd; but he sprang upon his feet, determined to make one last effort for his life by dropping into the ditch and, at the risk of being stifled, endeavouring to creep away in the darkness and confusion.

Roused into new strength and energy, and stimulated by the noise within the house which announced that an entrance had really been effected, he set his foot against the stack of chimneys, fastened one end of the rope tightly and firmly round it, and with the other made a strong running noose by the aid of his hands and teeth almost in a second. He could let himself down by the cord to within a less distance of the ground than his own height, and had his knife ready in his hand to cut it then and drop.

At the very instant when he brought the loop over his head previous to slipping it beneath his armpits—at that very instant the murderer, looking behind him on the roof, threw his arms above his head, and uttered a yell of terror.

"The eyes again!" he cried in an unearthly screech.

Staggering as if struck by lightning, he lost his balance and tumbled over the parapet. The noose was on his neck. It ran up with his weight, tight as a bowstring, and swift as the arrow it speeds. He fell for five-and-thirty-feet. There was a sudden jerk, a terrific convulsion of the limbs; and there he hung, with the open knife clenched in his stiffening hand.

The old chimney quivered with the shock, but stood it bravely. The murderer swung lifeless against the wall; and the boy, thrusting aside the dangling body which obscured his view, called to the people to come and take him out, for God's sake.

The dog, which had lain concealed till now, ran backwards and forwards on the parapet with a dismal howl, and collecting himself for a spring, jumped for the dead man's shoulders. Missing his aim, he fell into the ditch, turning completely over as he went; and striking his head against a stone, dashed out his brains . . .

THE ITINERANT MUSICIANS

In the course of their travels, a party consisting of a man, his wife, their son, and a barrel organ, arrive at a river which they wish to cross.

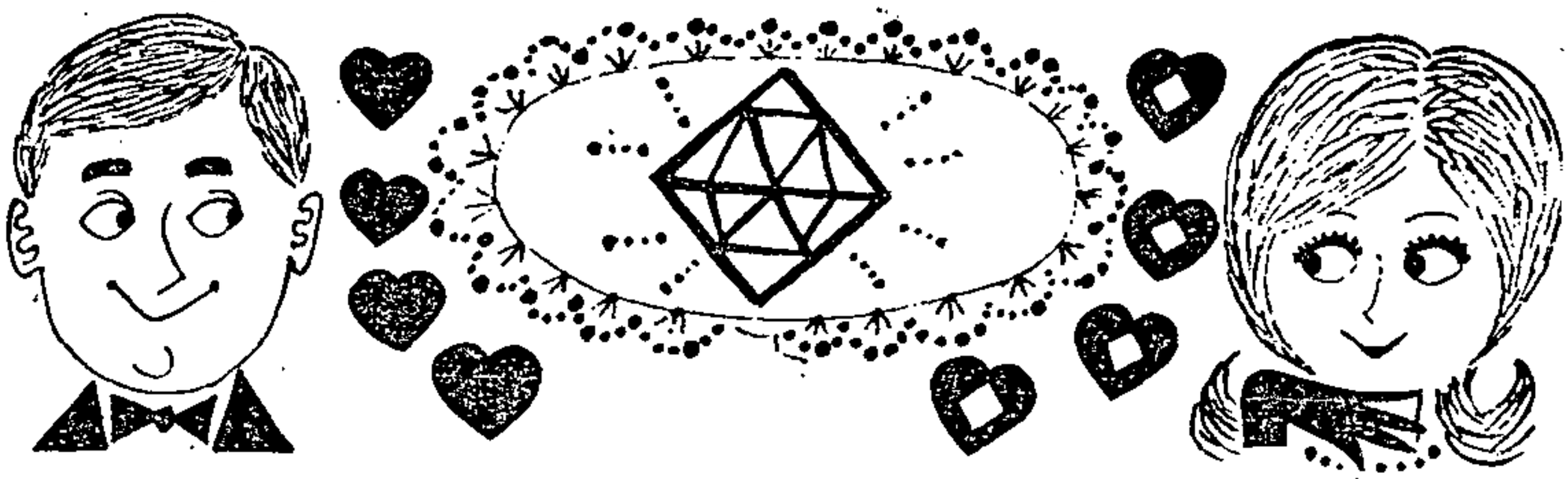
The ferry boat, which is in charge of a boy, will hold the two boys, or one adult, or one boy and the barrel organ. How do they all manage to get across?

For baffled readers the answer is at the foot of page 160.

SOLUTION TO TEN MINUTE CROSSWORD (PAGE 167)

ACROSS. 1, Patrol. 4, Shaft. 7, Backgammon. 8, Deed. 9, Dance. 11, Retired. 13, Disport. 15, Press. 17, Slap. 18, Preference. 20, Lodge. 21, Settle.

DOWN. 1, Powder. 2, Road. 3, Likened. 4, Stand. 5, Aim. 6, Tinge. 7, Beetle. 10, Noodle. 12, Digress. 14, Tipple. 15, Pupil. 16, Scene. 17, Scot. 19, End.



A SET OF *sparklers*

I've never been one of the dashing bad girls,
You can tell that I never have strayed,
For the wages of sin is a necklace of pearls,
But the wages of virtue is jade.

MONICA CURTIS, *Landslide*

Brooching it

"The important thing, dear," she said, "is to have a really good fur coat, I mean a proper, dark one." To Lady Montdore, fur meant mink; she could imagine no other kind except sable, but that would be specified. "Not only will it make all the rest of your clothes look better than they are, but you really needn't bother much about anything else as you need never take it off. Above all, don't go wasting money on underclothes, there is nothing stupider—I always borrow Montdore's myself. Now for evening a big diamond brooch is a great help, so long as it has good big stones."

NANCY MITFORD, *Love in a Cold Climate*

All is not Gold . . .

"Nay, tarry a moment, my charming girl:
Here is a jewel of gold and pearl;
A beautiful cross it is, I ween,
As ever on beauty's breast was seen.
There's nothing at all but love to pay;
Take it and wear it, but only stay!"
"Ah! Sir Hunter, what excellent taste!
I'm not—in such—particular—haste!"

BERANGER, *Le Chasseur et la Laitière*

Queen Elizabeth

She was strangely attired in a dress of silver cloth, white and crimson, or silver "gauze," as they call it. This dress had slashed sleeves lined with red taffeta, and was girt about with other little sleeves that hung down to the ground, which she was for ever twisting and untwisting. She kept the front of her dress open, and one could see the whole of her bosom, and passing low and often, she would open the front of this robe with her hands as if she was too hot. The collar of the robe was very high, and the lining of the inner part all adorned with little pendants of rubies and pearls, very many, but quite small. She had also a chain of rubies and pearls about her neck. On her head she wore a garland of the same material and beneath it a great reddish-coloured wig, with a great number of spangles of gold and silver, and hanging down over her forehead some pearls, but of no great worth. On either side of her ears hung two great curls of hair, almost down to her shoulders and within the collar of her robe, spangled as the top of her head.

DE MAISSE, *Journal*, 1597–98

The Way to Woo

He supplicates: *From the Indies far,*
Where rich Jewels are,
I will bring thee treasure
Far beyond all measure
and compare:
Then be not coy, my pretty little one,
for I no cost will spare.

Those bright locks of hair
Spreading o'er each ear,
Every crisp and curle,
Far more rich than pearl
doth appear:
Then be thou constant in thy love,
and I will be thy Dear.

She replies: *If a kisse or two*
Can thee a favour do,
Were it more than twenty
Love's indued with plenty;
Lovers know:
For thy sweet sake a thousand take,
for that's the way to wooe.

Ballad, Come Turn to Me

Dew-drop Ear-drops?

Suppose I were to give you, my pretty little dear,
A necklace of diamonds and rubies to wear?
O no, sir, O thank you, sir, kind sir, she answered me,
For it's dabbling in the dew that makes the milkmaids fair.

Dabbling in the Dew

Keepsake Peridot

I wouldn't be a kept woman . . . But he gave me wonderful stockings, and flowers, and all the books I wanted. Then of course the ring on my birthday—a square emerald set in platinum, deep, flawless. God knows what it must have cost. I was aghast. I looked and looked at it . . . I didn't know what to say. He said, " I did so want to give you an emerald, darling, because I love emeralds. Do you? "

" I do. Oh, I do," I said.

" Look," he said suddenly. " I thought this looked like you. I don't know why—I had to get it too."

He put it in my hand, and it was the ring I wanted, our ring —a ring for the little finger, early Victorian, I think, a peridot set round with little pearls in a thin, elaborately-turned gold setting. Made by hand and special. I loved it at once. " I'll wear it always," I said, " and the important one I'll wear at night alone, or when we dine together at the Ritz—when you want to flaunt me . . ." My darling little ring, I never take it off.

ROSAMOND LEHMANN, *The Weather in the Streets*

Jewelled Sky

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!—
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, *The Starlight Night*

One of ARGOSY'S bright discoveries tells a strange tale of three brothers

THE KNIFE

BY ANN DRYSDALE

WHEN they were demolishing the old courthouse in Williamstown, Mississippi, I was engaged to transfer the records into the Central Office pending the erection of the new building. Among the papers I found these—some in round childish hand, some in the cold, careful script of the clerk—letters, notes, statements left in chaos in an old box-file labelled, *Milton McCaslin: Homicide*, together with a rusted knife, the faint-labelled sole exhibit.

The other cases, each neat-buttoned, filed, complete, I stacked in my car and drove to the Central Office, but this I kept for a few days on the pretext of seeking what was lost. That night I took the yellowed mosaic home with me and shared the torment of a simple family caught in the most complex of human meshes.

It was the eighteenth of August 1863 when the posse came to take Milton McCaslin back to Williamstown for trial. He did not resist arrest: the Sheriff's evidence tells how he rode, long-legged, on a short cavalry horse, his brother Joel limping alongside with the bridle in his hand, staring ahead, while the kid, Daniel, watched them go. He had a foal in his arms, long-legged too, but innocent.

In the courthouse later there were but these three for witnesses. There was no defence, no prosecution. They charged Milton McCaslin with culpable homicide, and when they asked him to plead, he spoke the only truth he knew.

"*Uncle Mideon said to give him the knife, so I threw it into the water. No, he didn't say to give it to him, he was asking for it with his eyes, asking for it, so I threw it into the water.*"

Joel McCaslin's evidence had been copied carefully in crimped copperplate, and signed with a hand that did not tremble: "The booby is my brother and that's why I gave him the knife. I

gave him the knife because he asked for it with his great stupid eyes, and he's my brother.

"It was the day the papers came. The papers were late so I had to light out the same day to make up time they had lost. Daniel said could he ride with me to the end of our spread, and I said yes he could so he went to saddle up. Daniel is my brother, too.

"There was no hero's send-away, because of it being so sudden, the papers and all, but that was the way I wanted it. That way it was all right, just me and Daniel and the booby, because Uncle Mideon was downtown. He didn't even know about the papers coming until he was home and I was gone, and it was small and friendly and kind of sweet, so that I still tasted it small and sweet in my mouth on that first night under canvas.

"It was when Daniel went to saddle up that I gave. He was sitting there on the steps like a dog in the sun, with the light falling on him dusty. He was blinking dead at me, like he knew I was going away, and he had two heads of cotton in his hand. He was pressing them against his body, under his shirt, talking to them like they were animals. His name is Milton, but we never called him that, only booby. Mideon was the only one ever called him Milton.

"It was funny how small he looked then. All my life I was scared of the booby because he was so big and it seemed like his brain could only manage one part of him, and that was his great, strong hands. Maybe it was because I was on the top one of the twelve wooden steps and he was halfway down, sitting, but he looked suddenly small, and I suddenly got filled with a strange feeling that he was my brother, and a tingling, tearful brotherness shot out of me and seemed to pour over him as he sat blinking at me. I never felt that way before. It was the first time the papers ever came, and that's maybe why. I never felt that way since, and because of this leg there won't be any more papers. Maybe I never will feel like that again . . .

"Then he got up slowly, putting his hands on the ground and sticking his behind way up in the air, like a cow gets up. I laughed like a madman, because he was so funny, cowing his way up straight with such slowness and coming up the wooden steps in his great boots. Perhaps he felt that brotherness too. He looked so happy, like a kid, and he started laughing so we were both laughing. Oh, God, he's my brother. That's when I gave him the knife, and that's why.

"I know why I gave him the knife, but I don't know why it was the knife I gave him.

"That first night under canvas I found two cotton-heads in my pack."

The next sheets were written in the same copperplate, but this time beneath its formality ran the artless simplicity of a child, to whom all things are simple. For why should it occur to young Daniel that there might be anything to gain from lies?

"I went to saddle up, but when I got to the stable I found Joel's horse and Uncle Mideon's horse, but not mine. I have a yellow mare with white on, and she wasn't there. I could see Uncle Mideon's horse was lame. It is a dark gelding. So Uncle Mideon's horse was there and lame, and mine was gone. Uncle Mideon was downtown and needed a horse to get there, so I wasn't worried a bit.

"I saddled up Joel's horse and led him out. I was sure I could still go with him to the end of the spread, riding up front. I was so sure I even mounted. Joel came down the steps and the booby stayed at the top, watching Joel all the way down.

"When he got to the bottom, Joel shouted, 'Get off my horse,' but I knew he was only acting. He slung his pack up on the horse, and then pretended to send it off to the lines without him and with me instead. I wasn't fooled because I know Joel. He's my brother.

"Then he mounted up behind me and we went off, with the booby watching us. We saw him come slowly down the steps and sit in the dust at the bottom, looking down, 'He's seen a beetle,' Joel said. The booby likes beetles. He likes all little things. He pushed his face down towards it and I guessed he was grinning, like he always grins. We were farther away now. Then the booby raised his arm and brought it down again and again like a crazy thing. He had something in his hand. Joel did not see."

The next sheet was written in Joel's firm hand. He left to fight in the most senseless of wars, a civil strife, to do battle for half a country. I cannot tell if he begged to fight, or was begged, but only that the parting was hard.

He wrote: "I was glad Uncle Mideon was not there when I left. It felt good, me and Daniel riding together, and I had my arms around him, feeling his ribs under my own old shirt. I knew that the kid was crying, and I was glad Mideon was not there to see.

"When it was time for him to get off and go back, I kissed him. I was glad Mideon was not there to see that too.

"He walked back without looking round and I called out,

'Tell Mideon about the papers coming and all.' He didn't say anything, but I knew he heard me. He did not look back."

And Daniel wrote of it, too, in a round, careful hand. "I did not watch Joel ride away. I heard his horse, striking like time, regular against the dust, and then I felt that he was gone. When I got back to the house I was running. The booby had gone, but there were shuffled tracks in the dust leading to the woods out back. There were white bites taken out of the edges of the steps, and curling tongues of wood lying there, just as if someone had been cutting at them with a knife."

Milton's evidence was written for him, and signed with ill-formed capitals, as if he had carved it with the very knife.

"Now it is my knife. I take my knife to the woods and cut my name on a tree. I cut my name and Joel's name and Daniel's. I do not cut Mideon's. Uncle Mideon is too big to have his name cut on a tree. My knife grows out of my arm like Mideon's gun.

"I found a dead crow lying in the wood, but I did not kill it. It was just lying there, dead. Joel says not to touch things dead. Daniel says to bury them, and Mideon doesn't think about things dead. It was lying there so still. I wondered what deadness was like, and what things think that are dead. So I cut open its head with my knife, but there was nothing there.

"I killed two rabbits in the woods with my knife. One big and one little. They screamed, like Daniel when he was small and hurt. I think I hurt the rabbits with my knife, but I did not hurt the crow. I took them back to the house, warm and small in my arms. I laid them on the steps and left them, quiet, dead. When I came back they were gone."

Among the papers was a letter to Joel from Daniel:

Dear Joel,

I was glad you got there safe. They said this morning there was a letter at the office, so I rode down for it, and it was your letter to say you got there safe.

I showed it to Uncle Mideon and he said he was glad, too. He wasn't worried none about the papers and all. I explained it all when he got back.

I have to fetch supplies in now, like you used to do, only soon I shall have to take the ox-cart as Uncle Mideon wants to put my yellow mare with Judson's stallion. He says we're going to need another horse when you get back, because your one won't be fit for nothing after service. Sally is still at the store and I said you sent her your love. Was that right? I have to do most things when Uncle Mideon's downtown. The booby don't do anything.

It's funny about the booby. He has found a knife in the woods and today he killed two rabbits. It's funny, because the booby likes rabbits, especially as one of them was very small. I took them up to the house and Uncle Mideon said to cook them. He thought I killed them. I think he was pleased.

When the booby came back he did not look for the rabbits. I guess he had forgotten about them. He spends all his time in the woods now. I wish I were with you in the war, Joel.

I can't write more because I have to take this to the office so that it will leave there this week. I shall take it on my way to the store, so Uncle Mideon won't know I've been writing. Don't forget about me, Joel. You are my brother.

Daniel

And under the letter, I found a laborious postscript to his own evidence in Milton's hand: "*They were gone when I came back. I did not look for them, because I knew Mideon had them. I went back to the woods with my knife.*"

Now the copperplate took Joel's words again, robbing them of their identity and fashioning them into the sentiments of every wounded soldier.

"I didn't hear the single shot among the great trellis of shots, the one that was meant for me. It happened to me. Pain came, and all I could think was that it was so goddam unfair for it to happen to me, for it to hurt me.

"So I lay there, with the light filtering on me through the canvas. To remember it makes it happen all over again. My leg is shattered. Over there a man is lying dead, his face looks surprised. They have not covered his face. He just lies there, looking up, surprised. I saw him fall. He was right up to the wall when it happened, in the front line. He screamed like a baby. He clutched at his belly as though he were trying to keep his pain all to himself. He was one man then, a whole man dying among soldiers. He is dead now, and my leg is shattered. We did not take the fort.

"I am glad Daniel gave my love to Sally. Daniel is a good kid, a good brother.

"Soon the doctor will come to lance my leg to look for the bullet. He will slit open my leg and look in it for the bullet. Oh, God, God, don't let him hurt me. It is all so clear . . ."

And the page ended there, I turned over to find the rest of it, but the next sheet was Daniel again—I knew from the hand—a page torn from a notebook, a record of a moment of pure joy.

"Joel is coming home, Joel is coming home! His leg is hurt

and he is coming home. Mideon says I may not go to meet him, so I shall wait for him on the steps. The booby sits beside me, I writing and he whittling a stick with his knife. He never puts the knife down. Me and my brother are waiting on the steps. Waiting for Joel to come home.

"Then Mideon comes and tells me to take his horse out back, rub it down and feed it. He has been downtown again. We have to take great care of Mideon's horse as it is the only one left. My mare is giving suck to her foal, a black foal, black as Judson's stallion. I hurry down because soon Joel will be back. I must help him with his things because he has a bad leg."

Mideon was a shadow, a jigsaw made of the unspoken words of his dead brother's sons, and yet I knew him now as if I had known him then. But he was dead, and I had arrived at the next-to-last piece of paper in the file. Was this to be the laying-bare of the crime, the confession, the denial or the plea for mercy? Or perhaps all four? Did the copperplate shake a little as the trained hand took it down?

"Now Daniel has gone and I wait for Joel. Mideon is there too, waiting. Joel gave me the knife.

"I wonder why Joel was long. Mideon says it was because the doctor had to cut open his leg. I could have cut Joel's leg. My knife is sharp and strong. It could cut Joel's leg clean off. It shines in the sun like the barrel of Mideon's gun.

"Now Mideon sees the knife. When did I get it? He holds out his hand for it, for me to give it to him. He is asking for it with his eyes. Mideon shall not have my knife. That was when I ran to the woods and threw the knife into the water."

That was all of Milton's confession, Milton's plea for mercy.

It was Joel who brought the story to as near a conclusion as faithful reporting will let it come.

"I rode along the edge of the spread very slowly, so I could have some time with Daniel when he rode out to meet me. I had to ride side-saddle, like a woman, with my leg hanging stiff. Daniel did not come. I knew he would want to come, and I supposed that Mideon would not let him.

"I rode on in the sun, my leg hanging stiff. I was riding on the horse they gave me to come home on. It had a cavalry brand on its withers. It was a small horse. I knew Mideon would be angry that I had lost my own horse. I wondered if Daniel's mare had foaled. Still Daniel did not come.

"When I came in sight of the house, I saw the booby running tc the woods.

"I dismounted at the steps. Mideon was sitting on the top step, the twelfth step. He was resting against the wooden pillar with his back to me. I climbed the steps. It hurt me to climb, trying to keep my leg stiff, but I did not want Mideon to think I could not climb the steps.

"I went round to the front of him, and then I could see that someone had slit his throat with a knife.

"Daniel came round to the front, leading Mideon's dark gelding. 'Joel,' he said. 'Hullo, Joel.'"

I laid the papers back in the box and made a cup of coffee. Words cannot weep, but some must have wept that day in Williamstown, for I could find no trace of a verdict.

© Ann Drysdale 1964

HOW'S THAT?

Alfie opened *Wisden* at Rule 22 and, remarking casually, "There's a fair puzzle here," began to read:

"*Note (f): The striker is out if the ball is hugged to the body of the catcher even though he has not touched it with his hands. Should the ball lodge in the fieldsman's clothing, or in the top of the wicket-keeper's pads, this will amount to its being hugged to the body of the catcher.*

"Funny thing, that," said Alfie with an expression of wide-eyed innocence, "for if a ball sticks in a wicket-keeper's pads how can you say he's hugging it?"

"I think," said Halliday, "that it is one of those cases where a common phrase is given a wide interpretation to cover a large number of possible eventualities. But it's an interesting clause, certainly."

Alfie continued to dangle his carrot.

"Rule 44, note (c)," he said. "It always makes me laugh. *The umpire is not a boundary*. Just that."

"*What?*" said Halliday. "Let me have a look at the book."

"Would you like to borrow it for a few days?" said Alfie.

"That's very kind of you. Let me see. *The umpire is not a boundary*. Very odd. But I suppose if you scored four runs every time you hit me—I mean the umpire—it would be a very strong temptation, wouldn't it?"

Alfie, who had not failed to notice that "me," returned in triumph to the Horse and Harrow. "I 'ticed him," he said. "Now the next thing is to get him trained."

JOHN MOORE, *The Umpire*

RAYMOND CHANDLER

KILLER IN THE RAIN

MANDARIN'S JADE

CHANDLER's brilliant story Mandarin's Jade was first published in Dime Detective Magazine in 1937. Later the author borrowed small bits from it to incorporate into The Big Sleep and Farewell, My Lovely.

In this, as in all Chandler's stories, the shamus, or private eye, is fanatically ethical, won't take money till he feels he has earned it, and becomes thoroughly disillusioned with the types who hire him. But in Mandarin's Jade he does at least get a consolation prize . . .

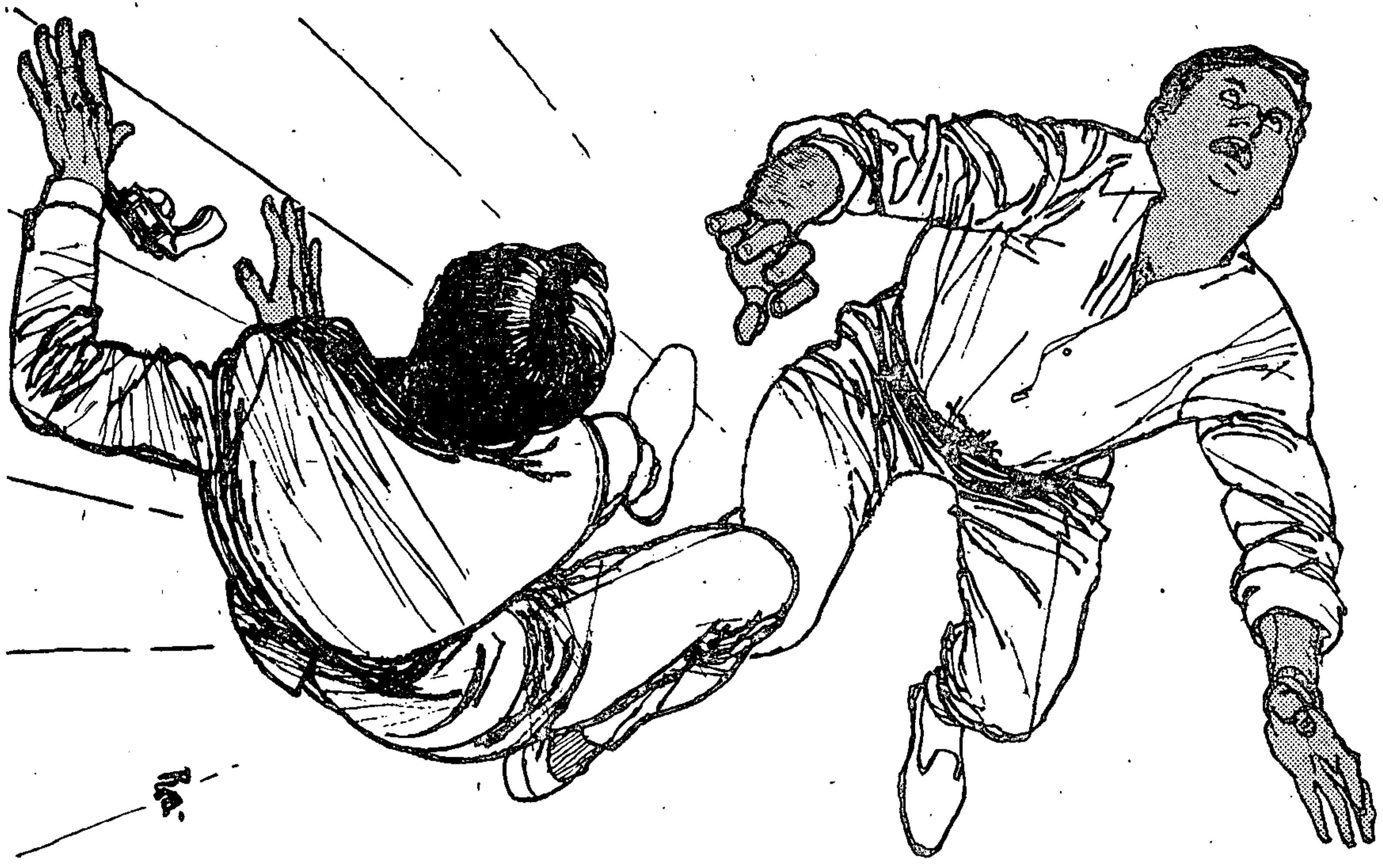
I WAS smoking my pipe and making faces at the back of my name on the glass part of the office door when Violets M'Gee called me up. There hadn't been any business in a week.

"How's the sleuth racket, huh?" Violets asked. He's a homicide dick in the sheriff's office. "Take a little flutter down at the beach? Body-guarding or something, it is."

"Anything that goes with a dollar," I said. "Except murder. I get three-fifty for that."

"I bet you do nice neat work too. Here's the lay."

He gave me the name, address, and telephone number of a man named Lindley Paul who lived at Castellamare, was a socialite and went everywhere except to work, lived alone with a Jap servant, and drove a very large car.



Castellamare was in the city limits, but didn't look it, being a couple of dozen houses of various sizes hanging by their eyebrows to the side of a mountain, and looking as if a good sneeze would drop them down on the beach.

I parked my old blue Chrysler down below, and walked up. It was a fine evening and there was still some sparkle on the water when I started. It had all gone when I reached the top. I sat down on the top step and rubbed my leg muscles and waited for my pulse to come down into the low hundreds. After that I shook my shirt loose from my back and went along to the house, which was the only one in the foreground.

It was a nice enough house, but it didn't look like really important money. There was a salt-tarnished iron staircase going up to the front door and the garage was underneath the house. A long black battleship of a car was backed into it, which looked as if it had cost more than the house.

The man who opened the door wore a white flannel suit with a violet satin scarf arranged loosely inside the collar. He had a soft brown neck, like the neck of a very strong woman. He had pale blue-green eyes, about the colour of an aquamarine, features on the heavy side but very handsome, three precise ledges of thick fair hair rising from a smooth brown forehead, an inch more of height than I had—which made him six feet one—and the general look of a guy who would wear a white flannel suit with a violet satin scarf inside the collar.

He cleared his throat, looked over my left shoulder, and said, "Yes?"

"I'm the man you sent for. The one Violets M'Gee recommended."

"Violets? Gracious, what a peculiar nickname . . . Oh, come in. You'll excuse me, I'm sure. My houseboy is away this evening. So I—" He smiled deprecatingly at the closing door, as though opening and closing it himself sort of dirtied him.

The living-room was the kind where people sit on floor cushions with their feet in their laps and sip absinthe through lumps of sugar and talk from the backs of their throats. There were bookshelves all around the balcony and bits of angular sculpture in glazed clay on pedestals. There were cosy little divans and bits of embroidered silk tossed here and there against the bases of lamps and so on. There was a big rosewood grand piano and on it a very tall vase with just one yellow rose in it.

Lindley Paul leaned in the curve of the piano and lit a cigarette without offering me one.

"It's a very slight matter," he said negligently. "Really hardly worth bothering you about. But I thought I might as well have an escort. You must promise not to flash any guns or anything like that. I suppose you do carry a gun?"

"Oh, yes," I said. "Yes."

"Well, I won't want you to use it, you know, or anything like

that. I'm just meeting a couple of men and buying something from them. I shall be carrying a little money in cash."

"How much money and what for?" I asked, putting one of my own matches to one of my own cigarettes.

"Well, really—" It was a nice smile, but I could have put the heel of my hand in it without feeling bad. I just didn't like the man.

"It's rather a confidential mission I'm undertaking for a friend. I'd hardly care to go into the details," he said.

"You just want me along to hold your hat," I suggested.

His hand jerked and some ash fell on his white suit cuff. That annoyed him. He frowned down at it, then he said softly, in the manner of a sultan suggesting a silk noose for a harem lady whose tricks have gone stale, "You are not being impertinent, I hope."

"Hope is what keeps us alive," I said.

He stared at me for a while. "I've a damned good mind to give you a sock on the nose," he said.

"That's more like it," I said. "You couldn't do it without hardening up a bit, but I like the spirit. What is it—blackmail?"

After a long time he said, "No. It's a necklace of Fei Tsui jade worth at least seventy-five thousand dollars. Did you ever hear of Fei Tsui jade?"

"No."

"We'll have a little brandy and I'll tell you about it. Yes, we'll have a little brandy."

He leaned away from the piano and went off like a dancer, without moving his body above the waist. I put my cigarette out and sniffed at the air and thought I smelt sandalwood, and then Lindley Paul came back with a nice-looking bottle and a couple of sniffing-glasses. He poured a tablespoonful in each and handed me a glass.

He said in a pleasant enough tone, "Fei Tsui jade is the only really valuable kind. The others are valuable for the workmanship put on them, chiefly. Fei Tsui is valuable in itself. There are no known unworked deposits, very little of it in existence, all the known deposits having been exhausted hundreds of years ago. A friend of mine had a necklace of this jade. Fifty-one carved mandarin beads, perfectly matched, about six carats each. It was taken in a hold-up some time ago. It was the only thing taken, and we were warned—I happened to be with this lady, which is one reason why I'm taking the risk of making the pay-off—not to tell the police or any insurance company, but wait for a phone call. The call came in a couple of days, the price was set at ten thousand dollars, and the time is tonight at eleven. I haven't heard the place yet. But it's to be somewhere fairly near here."

I looked into my empty sniffing-glass and shook it. He put a little more brandy in it for me. I sent that after the first dose and lit another cigarette, one of his this time.

"Jewel ransom racket," I said. "Well organised, or they wouldn't know where and when to pull the job. People don't wear

valuable jewels out very much, and half of the time, when they do, they're phoney. Is jade hard to imitate?"

"As to material, no," Lindley Paul said. "As to workmanship —that would take a lifetime."

"So the stuff can't be cut," I said. "Which means it can't be fenced except for a small fraction of the value. So the ransom money is the gang's only pay-off. I'd say they'll play ball. You left your bodyguard problem pretty late, Mr. Paul. How do you know they'll stand for a bodyguard?"

"I don't," he said rather wearily. "But I'm no hero. I like company in the dark. If the thing misses—it misses. I thought of going it alone and then I thought, why not have a man hidden in the back of my car, just in case?"

"In case they take your money and give you a dummy package? How could I prevent that? If I start shooting and come out on top and it *is* a dummy package, you'll never see your jade again. The contact men won't know who's behind the gang. And if I don't open up, they'll be gone before you can see what they've left you. They may not even give you anything. They may tell you your stuff will come to you through the mail after the money has been checked for markings. Is it marked?"

"My God, no!"

"It ought to be," I growled. "It can be marked these days so that only a microscope and black light could show the markings up. But that takes equipment, which means cops. O.K. I'll take a flutter at it. My part will cost you fifty bucks. Better give it to me now, in case we don't come back. I like to feel money."

His broad, handsome face seemed to turn a little white and glistening. He said swiftly, "Let's have some more brandy."

He poured a real drink this time.

We sat around and waited for the phone to ring. I got my fifty bucks to play with.

The phone rang four times and it sounded from his voice as if women were talking to him. The call we wanted didn't come through until ten-forty.

I DROVE. Or rather I held the wheel of the big black car and let it drive itself. I was wearing a sporty light-coloured overcoat and hat belonging to Lindley Paul. I had ten grand in hundred-dollar bills in one of the pockets. Paul was in the back seat. He had a silver-mounted Luger that was a pip to look at, and I hoped he knew how to use it. There wasn't anything about the job I liked.

The meeting-place was a hollow at the head of a canyon, about fifteen minutes from the house. Paul said he knew the spot fairly well and wouldn't have any trouble directing me.

"Keep your head down," I growled back at him. "We may be watched all the way. This car sticks out like spats at a picnic."

The car purred on in front of me until, "Turn right here," he whispered sharply at the top of the next hill.

I swung the black car into a wide, weed-grown boulevard that had never jelled into a traffic artery.

There was a house to a block now, all dark. The folks out there went to bed with the chickens it seemed. We slid down a slope to a dirt terrace, then down another slope, and a barricade painted white loomed across the track.

I heard a rustling behind me and Paul leaned over the seat, with a sigh in his whispered voice. "This is the spot. You've got to get out and move that barricade and drive on down into the hollow. That's probably so that we can't make a quick exit, as we'd have to back out. They want their time to get away."

"Shut up and keep down unless you hear me yell," I said.

I cut the almost noiseless engine and sat there listening. The crickets and tree-frogs got a little louder. I heard nothing else. Nobody was moving nearby, or the crickets would have been still. I touched the cold butt of the gun under my arm, opened the car door and slid out. There was brush all around. I went towards the barricade.

Perhaps this was just a try-out, to see if Paul did what he was told to do.

I put my hands out—it took both of them—and started to lift a section of the white barrier to one side. It wasn't a try-out. The largest torch beam in the world hit me square in the face from a bush not fifteen feet away.

A thin, high, niggerish voice piped out of the darkness behind the flash, "Two of us with shotguns. Put them mitts up high an' empty. We ain't takin' no chances."

I didn't say anything. I put my hands slowly into the air. The beam pinned me like a fly squashed on the wall. I had no particular thought except a vague wonder if there hadn't been a better way for us to work it.

"Tha's fine," the thin, high, whining voice said. "Jes' hold like that until I git aroun' to you." The voice awakened vague echoes in my brain. It didn't mean anything though. My memory had too many such echoes. I wondered what Paul was doing.

A thin, sharp figure detached itself from the fan of light, immediately ceased to be sharp or any shape at all and became a vague rustling off to the side. Then the rustling was behind me. I kept my hands in the air.

A light finger touched my back, then the hard end of a gun. The half-remembered voice said, "This may hurt jes' a little"

A giggle and a swishing sound. A white, hot glare jumped through the top of my head.

I woke up looking fuzzily at a star and listening to two goblins talking.

"Lou Lid."

"Who's Lou Lid?"

"A gunman you saw once down at the City Hall."

"Oh . . . Lou Lid." There wasn't anybody there. I was talking to myself, coming out of it.

Time passed and I got up very cautiously, like an old man getting out of a tub bath. My feet didn't have much feeling in them and my legs were rubbery. I wobbled and wiped the cold sweat of nausea off my forehead and felt the back of my head. It was soft and pulpy, like a bruised peach. When I touched it I could feel the pain clear down to my ankles. Then I saw the car.

It was Lindley Paul's car, lightless. I stumbled over to it and instinctively grabbed under my arm for a gun. Of course there wasn't any gun there now. But I still had a torch. I unshipped it, opened the rear door of the car and poked the light in.

It didn't show anything—no blood, no torn upholstery, no starred or splintered glass, no bodies. The car didn't seem to have been the scene of a battle. It was just empty. The keys hung on the ornate panel. It had been driven down there and left. I began to prowl, looking for him. He'd be around there all right, if the car was.

Then in cold silence a motor throbbed above the rim of the bowl. I dropped and crawled swiftly behind the hood of Lindley Paul's car.

Headlights were coming down the slope of the road into the bowl. I could hear the dull, idling sound of a small motor now.

Halfway down the car stopped. A spotlight at the side of the windscreen clicked on and swung to one side. It lowered, held steady on some point I couldn't see. The spot clicked off again and the car came slowly on down the slope. At the bottom it turned a little so that its headlamps raked the black sedan.

Its lights went out abruptly. Its engine died and once more the night became large and empty and black and silent. Then a door-latch snapped and there was a light, quick step on the ground and a beam of light cut across the top of my head like a sword.

Then a laugh. A girl's laugh—strained, taut as a mandolin wire. And the white beam jumped under the big black car and hit my feet.

The girl's voice said sharply, "All right, you. Come out of there with your hands up—and very damned empty. I've got you covered!"

"Put that toy up!" I snarled. "Or I'll blow it out of your hand." My voice sounded like somebody else's voice. It was hoarse and thick.

"Oh, a hard-boiled gentleman." There was a little quaver in the voice now. Then it hardened again. "Coming? I'll count

three. Ankle bones take years to get well when they've been hurt, and sometimes—"

I straightened up and looked into her flashlight. "I talk too much when I'm scared, too," I said.

"Don't—don't move another inch! Who are you?"

"A private dick—detective to you. Who cares?"

I started around the car towards her. She didn't shoot. When I was six feet from her I stopped.

"You stay right there!" she snapped angrily—after I had stopped.

"Sure. What were you looking at back there, with your windscreen spotlight?"

"A man."

"Hurt bad?"

"I'm afraid he's dead," she said simply. "And you look half dead yourself."

"I've been sapped," I said. "It always makes me dark under the eyes."

"A nice sense of humour," she said.

"Let's look him over," I said gruffly. "You can stay behind me with your pop-gun, if it makes you feel any safer."

"I never felt safer in my life," she said angrily, and backed away from me.

I circled the little car she had come in. About halfway up the slope a few feet off to the side I saw his foot.

He was smeared to the ground, on his back, at the base of a bush. He was in that bag-of-clothes position that always means the same thing.

One of his hands was flung out in a frozen gesture. His thick blond hair was matted with blood. black as shoe polish under the moon, and there was more of it on his face and there was a grey ooze mixed in with the blood.

Then was when I ought to have got shot. Up to that instant I hadn't even thought of the packet of money in my pocket. The thought came to me so quickly now, jarred me so hard, that I jammed a hand down into my pocket. It must have looked exactly like a hand going for a gun.

The pocket was quite empty. I took the hand out and looked back at her.

"Mister," she half sighed, "if I hadn't made my mind up about your face—"

"I had ten grand," I said. "It was his money. I was carrying it for him. It was a pay-off. I just remembered the money. And you've got the sweetest set of nerves I ever met on a woman. I didn't kill him."

"I didn't think you killed him," she said. "Somebody hated him to smash his head open like that."

"I hadn't known him long enough to hate him," I said.

I knelt and went through his pockets, trying not to move him

much. He had loose silver and bills, keys in a tooled leather case, the usual billfold and the usual insurance cards. No money in the folder. I wondered why they had missed his trouser pockets: two fine handkerchiefs as white and crisp as dry snow; a silver cigarette case full of his imported straight-cuts; another cigarette case, with a tortoiseshell frame and embroidered silk sides, each side a writhing dragon. I tickled the catch open and there were three long cigarettes under the elastic, Russians, with hollow mouthpieces. I pinched one. It felt old, dry.

"Maybe for ladies," I said. "He smoked others."

"Or maybe jujus," the girl said behind me, breathing on my neck. "I knew a lad who smoked them once. Could I look?"

I passed the case up to her and she poked her torch into it. There wasn't anything else to examine. She snapped the case shut and handed it back and I put it in his breast pocket.

"That's all. Whoever tapped him down was afraid to wait and clean up. Thanks."

I stood up casually and turned and speared the little gun out of her hand.

"Darn it, you didn't have to get rough!" she snapped.

"Give," I said. "Who are you, and how come you ride around this place at midnight?"

"I've been nice to you, haven't I?" she complained. "I'm burning up with curiosity and scared and I haven't asked you a single question, have I?"

"You've been swell," I said. "But I'm in a spot where I can't fool around. Who are you?"

"My name is Carol Pride," she said. "I try to do feature stories for a newspaper syndicate. Sometimes I can't sleep at night and I go out riding—just anywhere. I know all this country like a book. I saw your little light flickering around down in the hollow and it seemed to me it was pretty cold for young love—if they use lights."

"Not afraid of things are you, Miss Pride? Or would it be Mrs.?"

"No, it wouldn't . . . This neighbourhood isn't dangerous. People don't even lock their doors around here. I guess some bad men just happened to get wise how lonely it is."

I turned the little gun round and held it out. "Here. It's not my night to be clever. Now if you'll be good enough to ride me down to Castellamare, I'll pick up my car there and go find some law."

At the top of the rise I got out and dragged the section of white barricade back into position across the road. He was safe for the night now, and likely enough for many nights.

The girl didn't speak until we had come near the first house. Then she put the lights on and said quietly, "There's blood on your face, and I never saw a man who needed a drink worse. Why not go back to my house and phone from there?"

" You wouldn't want to be mixed up in a mess like this," I said. " I won't even mention you."

She said, " I'm an orphan and live all alone. It wouldn't matter in the slightest."

" Just keep going down to the beach," I said.

When we came to the place where my car was parked and the steps started up the hill I said good night to her and sat in the Chrysler until I couldn't see her tail-lights any more.

HOURS later, in the cold grey dawn, I left the West Los Angeles Police Station for home. I was guzzling aspirin and whisky and bathing the back of my head with very hot water when my phone jangled. It was Reavis, from the Homicide Bureau.

" Well, we got Lou Lid," he said. " Pasadena got him and a Mex named Fuente. Picked them up on Arroyo Seco Boulevard—not exactly with shovels, but kind of careful."

" Go on," I said, holding the phone tight enough to crack it, " give me the punch line."

" You guessed it already. They found them under the Colorado Street Bridge. Gagged, trussed fore and aft with old wire. And smashed like ripe oranges. Like it? "

I breathed hard. " It's just what I needed to make me sleep like a baby," I said.

" Well," Reavis said after a pause, " it looks like you bit into something rotten. What do you say now? "

" I'd say an attempted hijack of the pay-off money by a couple of smart alecks that got a lead to it somehow, picked their own spot and got smeared with the cash."

" Or maybe they tried to leave town with the whole take instead of passing it to the boss. Or the boss thought he had too many mouths to feed."

He said good night and wished me pleasant dreams.

I got down to the office late enough to be elegant, but not feeling that way. Carol Pride was in the waiting-room, sniffing at the faded red davenport, the two odd chairs, and the small square of carpet.

" Well, you do get up," she said. " That's nice to know. I was beginning to think perhaps you did all your work in bed."

" Tut, tut," I said. " Come into my boudoir."

I hadn't really seen her before, even by the lights down at Castellamare. She looked about twenty-six and as if she hadn't slept very well. She had a tired, pretty little face under fluffed-out brown hair, a rather narrow forehead with more height than is considered elegant, a small inquisitive nose, an upper lip a shade too long and a mouth more than a shade too wide. Her eyes could be very blue if they tried.

She looked quiet, but not mousy-quiet. She looked smart, but not Hollywood-smart.

" I read it in the evening paper that comes out in the morning," she said. " What there was of it."

" And that means the law won't break it as a big story. They'd have held it for the morning sheets."

" Well, anyhow, I've been doing a little work on it for you," she said.

I stared hard at her, poked a flat box of cigarettes across the desk, and filled my pipe. " You're making a mistake," I said. " I'm not on this case. This is a police job."

" I don't think it is," she said. " Not all of it. And anyway you have to earn your fee. Or didn't you get a fee? "

" Fifty bucks," I said. " I'll return it when I know who to return it to. Even my mother wouldn't think I earned it."

" I like you," she said. " You look like a guy who was almost a heel and then something stopped him—just at the last minute. Do you know who that jade necklace belonged to? "

I sat up with a jerk that hurt. " What jade necklace? " I almost yelled. I hadn't told her anything about a jade necklace. There hadn't been anything in the paper about a jade necklace.

" You don't have to be clever. I've been talking to the man on the case—Lieutenant Reavis. I get along with policemen. So he told me things."

" Well—who does it belong to? " I asked, after a heavy silence.

" A Mrs. Philip Courtney Prendergast. Her husband has a million or so and a bad liver. Mrs. Prendergast is a black-eyed blonde who goes places while Mr. Prendergast stays home and takes calomel."

" Did Reavis tell you about Lou Lid and Fuente the Mex? "

" No. Who are they? "

I told her about them. " Why, that's terrible," she said, and smiled.

" Your old man wasn't a cop by any chance, was he? " I asked suspiciously.

" Police Chief of Pomona for almost fifteen years."

I didn't say anything. I remembered that Police Chief John Pride of Pomona had been shot dead by two kid bandits about four years before.

The girl groped in her brown bag and said, " There's something else. But maybe you ought to handle this part of it yourself."

" It's nice to know I'm still working here," I said.

She rolled three long Russian cigarettes across the desk. She didn't smile.

" Look inside the mouthpieces," she said, " and draw your own conclusions. I swiped them out of that Chinese case last night. They all have that something to make you wonder."

" And you a cop's daughter," I said.

She stood up. " I'm a woman too. Now I've got to go see a society editor and find out more about Mrs. Philip Courtney Prendergast and her love life. Fun, isn't it? "

The office door and my mouth shut at about the same moment.

I picked up one of the Russian cigarettes. I pinched it between my fingers and peeped into the hollow mouthpiece. There seemed to be something rolled up in there. I finally managed to dig it out with the nail-file blade of my pocket-knife.

It was a thin ivory calling-card, man's size. Three words were engraved on it, nothing else.

SOUKESIAN THE PSYCHIC.

I looked into the other mouthpieces, found identical cards in each of them. It didn't mean a thing to me. I had never heard of Soukesian the Psychic.

I had a rough idea what his racket would be and what kind of people would be his customers. And the bigger he was the less he would advertise. If you gave him enough time and paid him enough, he would cure anything from a tired husband to a grasshopper plague. He would be an expert in frustrated women, in tricky, tangled, love affairs, in whether to sell the property now or hold it another year, in whether this part will hurt my type with my public or improve it. Even men would go to him. But most of all, women—women with money, women with jewels, women who could be twisted like silk thread around a lean Asiatic finger.

I pushed the bottle to one side and grinned. Anyone would find those cards who went through Lindley Paul's pockets with a fine-tooth comb—carefully and taking time. Who would do that? A cop. And when? If Mr. Lindley Paul died or was badly hurt in mysterious circumstances.

I took my hat off the telephone and called a man named Willy Peters who was in the insurance business, so he said, and did a sideline selling unlisted telephone numbers bribed from maids and chauffeurs. His fee was five bucks. I figured Lindley Paul could afford it out of his fifty.

Willy Peters had what I wanted. It was a Brentwood Heights number. I called it.

After a while a slightly foreign woman's voice said, " 'Allo."

" May I speak to Mr. Soukesian? "

" I am ver-ry sor-ry. Soukesian he weel never speak upon the telephone. I am hees secretar-ry. Weel I take the message? "

" Yeah. Got a pencil? "

" But of course I 'ave the pencil. The message, eef you please?"

I gave her my name and address and occupation and telephone number first. I made sure she had them spelt right. Then I said, " It's about the murder of a man named Lindley Paul. It happened last night down on the Palisades near Santa Monica. I'd like to consult Mr. Soukesian."

" He weel be ver-ry pleased." Her voice was as calm as an oyster. " But of course I cannot give you the appointment today. Soukesian he ees always ver-ry busy. Per'aps tomorrow—"

" Next week will be fine," I said heartily. " There's never any

hurry about a murder investigation. Just tell him I'll give him two hours before I go to the police with what I know."

There was a silence. Maybe a breath caught sharply and maybe it was just wire noise. Then the slow foreign voice said, " I weel tell him. I do not understand—"

" Give it the rush, angel. I'll be waiting in my office."

I hung up, fingered the back of my head, put the three cards away in my wallet, and went out to get some hot food.

THE Indian smelt. He smelt clear across my little reception room when I heard the outer door open and got up to see who it was. He stood just inside the door looking as if he had been cast in bronze.

His hat was at least two sizes too small. He wore it about where a house wears a weathercock.

He had a big, flat face, a big, high-bridged, fleshy nose that looked as hard as the prow of a cruiser. He had lidless eyes, drooping jowls, the shoulders of a blacksmith. If he had been cleaned up a little and dressed in a white nightgown, he would have looked like a very wicked Roman senator.

His smell was the earthy smell of the primitive man; dirty, but not the dirt of cities. " Huh," he said. " Come quick. Come now."

I jerked my thumb at the inner office and went back into it. He followed me ponderously and made as much noise walking as a fly makes. I sat down behind my desk, pointed at the chair opposite, but he didn't sit down. His small black eyes were hostile.

" Me Second Harvest. Me Hollywood Indian."

" Take a chair, Mr. Harvest."

He snorted and his nostrils got very wide. They had been wide enough for mouseholes in the first place.

" Name Second Harvest. No Mr. Harvest. Nuts."

" What do you want? "

" He say come quick. Big white father say come now. He say—"

" Don't give me any more of that pig Latin," I said. " I'm no schoolmarm at the snake dances."

" Nuts," he said.

He removed his hat with slow disgust and turned it upside down. He removed a paper-clip from the edge of the leather and moved near enough to throw a dirty fold of tissue paper on the desk.

I unfolded the bit of tissue paper and found a card which read, SOUKESIAN THE PSYCHIC. It was in thin script, nicely engraved. I had three just like it in my wallet . . .

I played with my empty pipe, stared at the Indian, tried to ride him with my stare. " O.K. What does he want? "

" He want you come now. Quick."

" It will cost him a hundred bucks as a retainer."

The Indian tossed another fold of tissue-paper on the desk. I unfolded it. It contained a brand-new hundred-dollar bill.

" Psychic is right," I said. " A guy that smart I'm scared of, but I'll go nevertheless."

The Indian put his hat back on his head.

I took a gun from under my arm, fiddled with the safety and put the gun back in its holster.

This meant no more to the Indian than if I had scratched my neck. I locked up and we went out . . .

We drove well out of town, past two orange groves, past houses moulded flat to the side of the foothills, like bas-reliefs.

Then there were no more houses, just the burnt foothills.

The ribbon of road twisted into a hairpin, the big tyres skidded on loose stones, and the car tore through an open gate and up a steep drive lined with pink geraniums growing wild. At the top of the drive there was a hilltop house of white plaster and glass and chromium. The car stopped before a blank white wall in which there was a black door.

The black door in the white wall opened slowly, untouched from outside, and showed a narrow passage.

The Indian said, " Huh. Go in, big shot."

" After you, Mr. Harvest."

He went in scowling and I followed him and the black door closed noiselessly of itself behind us. A bit of mumbo-jumbo for the customers. At the end of the narrow passage there was an elevator. I had to get into it with the Indian. We went up slowly, with a gentle purring sound, the faint hum of a small motor. The elevator stopped, its door opened without a whisper and there was daylight.

I got out of the elevator. It dropped down again behind me with the Indian still in it. I was in a turret room that was almost all windows, some close-curtained against the afternoon glare. The rugs on the floor had the soft colours of old Persians. Behind the desk there was a woman smiling at me, a dry, tight, withered smile that would turn to powder if you touched it.

She had sleek, black, coiled hair, a dark Asiatic face.

There were pearls in her ears and rings on her fingers, large, rather cheap rings, including a moonstone and a square-cut emerald as phoney as a ten-cent store slave bracelet. Her hands were little and dark and not young and not fit for rings.

" Ah, so ver-ry good of you to come. Soukesian he weel be so pleased."

" Thanks," I said.

I took the new hundred-dollar bill out of my wallet and laid it on her desk, in front of her dark, glittering hands. She didn't touch it or look at it.

" My party," I said. " But thanks for the thought."

She got up slowly, without moving the smile, swished around the desk in a tight dress that fitted her like a mermaid's skin.

" I weel conduct you," she said.

She opened a narrow door beyond which there was a silky glow that didn't seem to be daylight. Her smile was older than Egypt now. I nudged my gun holster again and went in.

The door shut silently behind me. The room was octagonal, draped in black velvet, windowless, with a remote black ceiling. In the middle of the black rug there stood a white octagonal table, and on either side of that a stool that was a smaller edition of the table. Over against the black curtains there was one more such stool. There was a large milky ball on a black stand on the white table. The light came from this. There was nothing else in the room.

I stood there for perhaps fifteen seconds, with that obscure feeling of being watched. Then the velvet curtains parted and a man came into the room and walked straight over to the other side of the table and sat down. Only then did he look at me.

He said, " Be seated opposite me, please. Do not smoke and do not move or fidget, if you can avoid it. How may I serve you? "

He was a tall man, straight as steel, with the blackest eyes and the palest and finest blond hair I had ever seen. He might have been thirty or sixty. He didn't look any more like an Armenian than I did.

I gulped and said, " I don't want a reading. I know all about this stuff."

" Yes? " he said delicately. " And what do you know about it? "

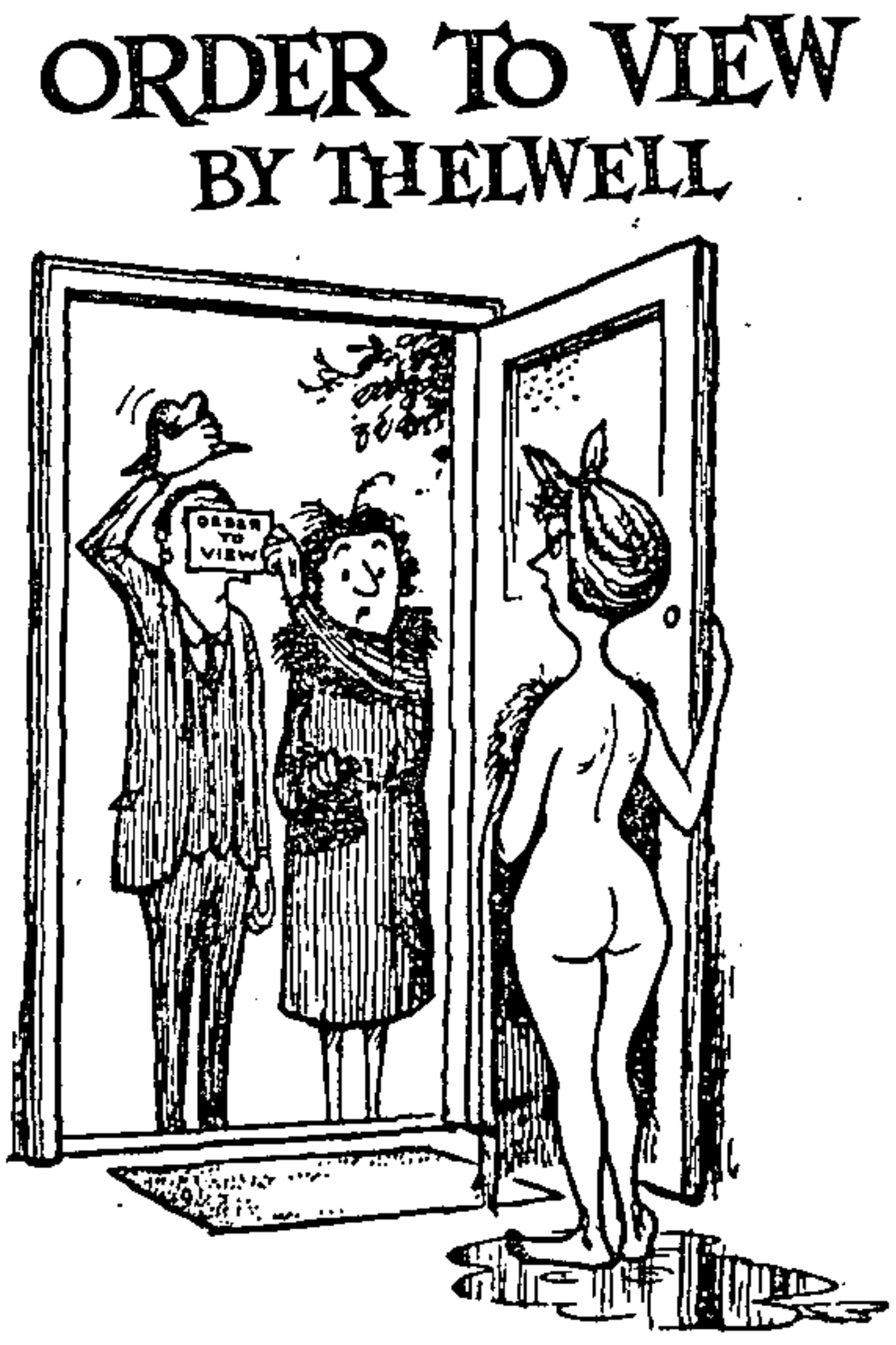
" Let it pass," I said. " I can figure the secretary because she's a sweet build-up for the shock people get when they see you. The Indian stumps me a bit, but it's none of my business anyhow.

" What I came about is a murder."

" The Indian happens to be a natural medium," Soukesian said mildly. " They are much rarer than diamonds, and like diamonds, they are sometimes found in dirty places. That might not interest you either. As to the murder, you may inform me. I never read the papers."

" Come, come," I said. " Not even to see who's pulling the big cheques at the front office? O.K., here it is."

And I laid it in front of him, the whole damn story, and about his cards and where they



" No! This Is No. 16."

had been found. He just sat there and looked at me, like a stone lion outside the Public Library.

When I was all done he put his finger right down on the spot. "You kept those cards from the police? Why?"

"You tell me. I just did."

"Obviously the hundred dollars I sent you was not nearly enough."

"That's an idea too," I said. "But I hadn't really got round to playing with it."

He moved enough to fold his arms. His black eyes were as shallow as a cafeteria tray or as deep as a hole to China—whichever you like. They didn't say anything, either way.

He said, "You wouldn't believe me if I said I only knew this man in the most casual manner—professionally?"

"I'd take it under advisement," I said.

"Let me see one of those cards."

I got my wallet out and withdrew one card and laid it in front of him. He turned the card over with a fingernail.

"You know what I figure?" I said heartily. "I figure Lindley Paul thought you would be able to find out who did him in, even if the police couldn't. Which means that he was afraid of somebody."

Soukesian unfolded his arms and folded them the other way. With him that was probably equivalent to climbing up the light fixture and biting off a bulb.

"You don't think anything of the sort," he said. "Perhaps it is not money you want after all."

"Perhaps it isn't."

I didn't see him move his foot, but he must have touched a floor button. The black velvet curtains parted and the Indian came into the room. He didn't look dirty or funny any more.

He was dressed in loose white trousers and a white tunic embroidered in black. There was a black sash around his waist and a black fillet around his forehead. His black eyes were sleepy. He shuffled over to the stool beside the curtains, sat down and folded his arms and leaned his head on his chest. He looked bulkier than ever, as if these clothes were over his other clothes.

Soukesian held his hands above the milky globe that was between us on the white table.

. . . occupying a most bracing position . . .

The light on the remote black ceiling was broken and began to weave into odd shapes and patterns, very faint because the ceiling was black. The Indian kept his head low and his chin on his chest but his eyes turned up slowly and stared at the weaving hands.

The Indian's solid jaw rested on his solid chest and slowly, like a toad's eyes, his eyes shut.

" I could have hypnotised him without all that," Soukesian said softly. " It's merely part of the show."

" Yeah," I watched his lean, firm throat.

" Now, something Lindley Paul touched," he said. " This card will do."

He stood up noiselessly and went across to the Indian, pushed the card inside the fillet against the Indian's forehead, and left it there. He sat down again.

He began to mutter softly in a guttural language I didn't know. I watched his throat.

The Indian began to speak. He spoke very slowly and heavily, between motionless lips, as though the words were heavy stones he had to drag up hill in a blazing hot sun.

" Lindley Paul bad man. Make love to squaw of chief. Chief very angry. Chief have necklace stolen. Lindley Paul have to get um back. Bad man kill. *Grrrr*."

The Indian's head jerked as Soukesian clapped his hands. The little lidless black eyes snapped open again. Soukesian looked at me with no expression at all on his handsome face.

" Neat," I said, " and not a darn bit gaudy." I jerked a thumb at the Indian. " A bit heavy to sit on your knee, isn't he? I haven't seen a good ventriloquist act since chorus girls quit wearing tights."

Soukesian smiled faintly.

" I watched your throat muscles," I said. " I guess I get the idea. Paul had been cutting corners with somebody's wife.

" The somebody was jealous enough to have him put away. It has points, as a theory. Because this jade necklace she was wearing wouldn't be worn often and somebody had to know she was wearing it that particular night when the stick-up was pulled off. A husband would know that."

" It is quite possible," Soukesian said. " And since you were not killed perhaps it was not the intent to kill Paul. Merely to beat him up."

" This is the priest hole."

"Yeah," I said. "And here's another idea. I ought to have had it before. If Lindley Paul really did fear somebody and wanted to leave a message, then there might still be something written on those cards—in invisible ink."

That got to him. His smile hung on but it had a little more wrinkle at the corners than at first. The time was short for me to judge that.

The light inside the milky globe suddenly went out. Instantly the room was pitch dark. You couldn't see your own hand. I jerked my gun free and started to back away.

A rush of air brought a strong earthy smell with it. It was uncanny. Without the slightest error of timing or space, even in that complete blackness, the Indian hit me from behind and pinned my arms.

He lifted me with his two hands holding my arms against my sides as though a steam crane was lifting me.

He threw me sideways, wrapped my legs with his legs as we fell, and had me in a barrel. I hit the floor hard, with part of his weight on me.

The light flicked on again.

Soukesian was standing beyond the table, leaning on it. He looked older. There was something on his face I didn't like. He looked like a man who had something to do he didn't relish, but was going to do it all the same.

"So," he said softly. "Invisible writing."

Then the curtains swished apart and the thin dark woman rushed into the room with a reeking white cloth in her hands and slapped it around my face, leaning down to glare at me with hot black eyes.

I had to breathe chloroform. There was too much weight dragging my throat tight. The thick, sweetish reek of it ate into me . . .

I went away from there.

Just before I went somebody fired a gun twice. The sound didn't seem to have anything to do with me.

I was lying out in the open again, just like the night before. This time it was daylight and the sun was burning a hole in my right leg.

I could see the hot blue sky, the lines of a ridge, scrub oak, yuccas in bloom spouting from the side of a hill, more hot blue sky.

"Look at the cellar while you're down there, sir."

I sat up.

The breeze off the ocean lifted up the slope and put a little frail life into me. I staggered around dopily and looked at some tyre marks on red clay.

I saw the feet.

They stuck out casually from under a bush. I went over there and looked down at the Indian.

His broad, blunt hands lay at his sides, large and empty and limp. There were bits of clay and dead leaf in his greasy black hair. A tracery of sunlight skimmed along his brown cheek. On his stomach the flies had found a sodden patch of blood.

He had his comic street clothes on again and his greasy hat lay near him. He wasn't funny any more, or tough, or nasty. He was just a poor simple dead guy who had never known what it was all about.

I had killed him, of course. Those were my shots I had heard, from my gun.

I didn't find the gun. I went through my clothes. The other two Soukesian cards were missing. Nothing else. I followed the tyre tracks to a deeply rutted road and followed that down the hill.

It took me half an hour to reach the nearest service station. I phoned for a taxi and it had to come from Santa Monica. I drove home, changed clothes, put my last gun in the holster and sat down to the phone.

Soukesian wasn't home. Nobody answered that number. Carol Pride didn't answer her number. I didn't expect her to. She was probably having tea with Mrs. Philip Courtney Prendergast. But police headquarters answered their number, and Reavis was still on the job. He didn't sound pleased to hear from me.

"Anything new on the Lindley Paul killing?" I asked him. "I think her husband had it done."

He was silent for a moment. Then, "Whose husband, smart boy?"

"The husband of the dame that lost the jade beads, naturally."

He was silent again. This time so long that I could hear the loudspeaker on his wall put out a police bulletin on a stolen car.

"This is my husband's little den."

Then he said very smoothly and distinctly, " If I could trust you, I'd tell you we want to break up a very smart jewel gang. But I can't trust you. Where are you? "

" I'm in bed," I said.

" Well, you just fill yourself a nice hot-water bottle and put it on your face and go to sleep like a good little boy, will you please? "

" Naw. I'd rather go out and shoot an Indian, just for practice."

" Well, just one Indian."

" Don't forget that bit," I yelled, and hung the phone in his face.

I had a drink on the way down to the boulevard, black coffee laced with brandy. It made my stomach feel like new, but I still had the same shopworn head. And I could still smell chloroform.

I went up to the office and into the little reception-room. There were two of them this time. Carol Pride and a blonde. A blonde with black eyes. A blonde to make a bishop kick a hole in a stained-glass window.

Carol Pride stood up and scowled at me and said, " This is Mrs. Philip Courtney Prendergast. She has been waiting quite some time. And she's not used to being kept waiting. She wants to employ you."

The blonde smiled at me and put a gloved hand out. I touched the hand. She was perhaps thirty-five and she had that wide-eyed, dreamy expression, as far as black eyes can have it. Whatever you need, whatever you are—she had it.

" Excuse me for keeping you waiting, Mrs. Prendergast," I said. " I had to go out on a little business."

" I don't see why you had to go out," Carol Pride said icily.

I placed chairs for them and sat down and the phone rang.

A strange voice said, " We have the gun. I guess you'll want it back, won't you? "

" Both of them. I'm a poor man."

" We've only got one," the voice said smoothly. " The one the cops would like to have. I'll be calling you later. Think things over."

" Thanks." I hung up and smiled at Mrs. Prendergast.

" I'll do the talking," Carol Pride said.

" Mrs. Prendergast has taken me into her confidence. I don't know why, unless it is that I have shown her where a lot of unpleasant notoriety can be avoided. Mrs. Prendergast would like to get her jade necklace back—without Mr. Prendergast knowing it was stolen. It seems he doesn't know yet."

Mrs. Prendergast gave me a smile I could feel in my hip pocket. " I just love straight rye," she cooed. " Could we—just a little one? " I got out a couple of pony glasses and poured a couple of drinks for the ladies. Carol Pride didn't touch hers at all.

Mrs. Prendergast put her drink to sleep with one punch and looked at the bottle. I milked it again.

" Mrs. Prendergast had a duplicate of her jade necklace—in soapstone," Carol said.

I sat up straighter. Lindley Paul had let something drop about it taking a lifetime to duplicate the workmanship on Fei Tsui beads—even if material were available.

Mrs. Prendergast fiddled with her second drink, but not for long. Her smile got warmer and warmer.

" So when she went to a party outside Beverly Hills, Mrs. Prendergast was supposed to wear the imitation. Mr. Prendergast was very particular about that."

" And he has a lousy temper," Mrs. Prendergast said.

I put some more rye under her hand. Carol Pride watched me do it and almost snarled at me, " But on the night of the hold-up she made a mistake and was wearing the real one."

I leered at her.

" I know what you're thinking," she snapped. " Who knew she had made that mistake? It happened that Mr. Paul knew it, soon after they left the house. He was her escort."

" He—er—touched the necklace a little," Mrs. Prendergast sighed. " He could tell real jade by the feel of it. I've heard some people can. He knew a lot about jewels."

I leaned back again in my squeaky chair. " Hell," I said disgustedly, " I ought to have suspected that guy long ago. The gang had to have a society finger. How else could they tell when the good things were out of the ice-box? He must have double-crossed them and they used this chance to put him away."

" Rather wasteful of such a talent, don't you think? " Carol Pride said sweetly.

" Where and how was the stick-up? " I rapped.

" Well, that seems a little funny too," Carol Pride said, beating Mrs. Prendergast by half a word. " After the party Mr. Paul drove her home past a certain down-at-heel hotel called the Tremaine and a beer parlour across the street from it. Mrs. Prendergast noticed a car pull away from in front of the beer parlour and follow them. She's pretty sure it was the same car that crowded them to the kerb a little later—and the hold-up men knew just what they wanted. Mrs. Prendergast remembers all this very well."

" Well, naturally," Mrs. Prendergast said. " You don't lose a string of beads like that every night."

She put her fifth drink down her throat.

" I wouldn't know a darn thing about wha-what those men looked like," she told me a little thickly. " Lin—tha's Mr. Paul—I called him Lin, y'know, felt kinda bad about it. That's why he stuck his neck out."

" It was your money—the ten thousand for the pay-off? " I asked her.

" It wasn't the butler's, honey. And I want those beads back before Court gets wise. How about lookin' over that beer parlour? "

She grabbed around in her black and white bag and pushed

some bills across the desk in a lump. I straightened them out and counted them. They added to four hundred and sixty-seven dollars. Nice money. I let them lie.

"Mr. Prendergast," Carol Pride ploughed on sweetly, "whom Mrs. Prendergast calls Court, thinks the imitation necklace was taken. He can't tell one from the other, it seems. He doesn't know anything about last night except that Lindley Paul was killed by some bandits."

"The hell he doesn't." I pushed the money back across the desk. "I believe you think you're being blackmailed, Mrs. Prendergast. You're wrong. I think the reason this story hasn't broken in the press is because pressure has been brought on the police. They'd be willing anyhow, because what they want is the jewel gang. The punks that killed Paul are dead already."

Mrs. Prendergast stared at me with a hard, bright, alcoholic stare. "I hadn't the slightest idea of bein' blackmailed," she said. She was having trouble with her s's now. "I want my beads and I want them quick. It's not a question of money. Not 'tall. Gimme a drink."

"It's in front of you," I said. She could drink herself under the desk for all I cared.

Carol Pride said, "Don't you think you ought to go out to that beer parlour and see what you can pick up?"

The blonde was waving the bottle over her two glasses. She got herself a drink poured finally, drank it, and pushed the handful of currency around on the desk with a free and easy gesture, like a kid playing with sand.

I took it away from her, put it together again and went around the desk to put it back into her bag.

"If I do anything, I'll let you know," I told her. "I don't need a retainer from *you*, Mrs. Prendergast."

She liked that. She almost took another drink, thought better of it with what she still had to think with, got to her feet and started for the door.

I got to her in time to keep her from opening it with her nose. I held her arm and opened the door for her and there was a uniformed chauffeur leaning against the wall outside.

"O.K.," he said listlessly, and took hold of her. "Let's go, baby."

They went down the corridor and turned a corner out of sight. I went back into the office and sat down behind my desk and looked at Carol Pride. "To hell with her," I said angrily. "To hell with her beer-parlour angle too."

"Her morals are neither here nor there. She told me she's suspected for some time that Paul was a Raffles."

"Paul didn't steal her necklace."

"No?"

"No. And she didn't have any duplicate of it."

Her eyes got narrower and darker . . .

"I suppose Soukesian the Psychic told you all this," she said.

"Who's he?"

"I see," she said slowly. "You don't like my work. Excuse me for butting in. I thought I was helping you a little."

"I told you it was none of my business. Go on home and write yourself a feature article. I don't need any help."

"I thought we were friends," she said. "I thought you liked me." She stared at me for a minute with bleak, tired eyes.

"I've got a living to make. I don't make it bucking the police department."

She stood up and looked at me a moment longer without speaking. Then she walked to the door and went out. I heard her steps die along the mosaic floor of the corridor.

I sat there for ten or fifteen minutes almost without moving. I tried to guess why Soukesian hadn't killed me. None of it made any sense. I went down to the parking lot and got into my car.

THE Hotel Tremaine was far out of town, near the junk yards. I drove past, got out, and looked back from the corner of the block.

I knew all about places like the Hotel Tremaine, I had slept in them, staked out in them, fought with bitter, scrawny landladies in them, got shot at in them, and might yet get carried out of one of them to the morgue wagon.

The beer parlour was on my side of the street. I opened the door and went in. A man sat on a stool with a brown hat on the back of his head reading a letter.

I said, "Beer."

He drew it slowly.

I sipped my beer and held my glass with my left hand. After a while I said, "Seen Lou Lid lately?" This seemed to be in order. There had been nothing in any paper I had seen about Lou Lid and Fuente the Mex.

The barkeep looked at me blankly. The skin over his eyes was grained like lizard skin. Finally he spoke in a husky whisper. "Don't know him."

There was a thick white scar on his throat. A knife had gone in there once which accounted for the husky whisper.

The man who was reading the letter guffawed suddenly and slapped his thigh. "I gotta tell this to Moose," he roared.

He got down off his stool and ambled over to a door in the rear wall and went through it.

The barkeep said in his husky whisper, "Lou Lid, huh? Lots a guys come in here. I dunno their names. Copper?"

"Private," I said. "Don't let it bother you. I'm just drinking beer. Who's Moose?"

"Him? That's the boss. Moose Magoon."

He dipped a thick towel down in a bucket and folded it and

wrung it out and pushed it along the bar holding it by the ends. That made a club about two inches thick and eighteen inches long. You can knock a man into the next county with a club like that if you know how.

The man with the letter came back through the rear door, still chuckling, shoved the letter into his side pocket and strolled to the pin game. That put him behind me. I began to get a little worried.

I finished my beer quickly and stood down off the stool. The barkeep held his twisted towel and moved it back and forth slowly.

"Nice beer," I said. "Thanks all the same."

"Come again," he whispered, and knocked my glass over.

That took my eyes for a second. When I looked up again the door at the back was open and a big man stood in it with a big gun.

He didn't say anything. He just stood there. The gun looked at me. It looked like a tunnel. The man was very broad, very swarthy. He had a build like a wrestler. He looked plenty tough. He didn't look as if his real name was Magoon.

Nobody said anything. The barkeep and the man with the big gun just stared at me fixedly.

I went head first over the bar in a rolling dive.

I hit the barkeep's legs and the dirty floor about the same moment. He sat down on my neck.

That put my nose in a puddle of stale beer and one of my ears into some very hard concrete floor. My head began to howl with pain. I was low down along a sort of duckboard behind the bar and half turned on my left side. I jerked the gun loose from my waistband.

The barkeep made a kind of annoyed sound.

I rolled a little more and put the gun in the seat of his pants. "Hold it?" I snarled at him. "I don't want to get vulgar with you."

Two shots roared. These cut through wood. The bar was old and solid but not solid enough to stop .45 slugs. The barkeep sighed above me. Something hot and wet fell on my face. "You've shot me, boys," he whispered, and started to fall down on top of me.

I wriggled away just in time, got to the end of the bar and looked around it. A face with a brown hat over it was about nine inches from my own face, on the same level.

I got up before the man I was facing had even reacted to the situation. He didn't do anything. He just slid off to one side and as he slid a thick gulp of red came out of his mouth.

I crawled farther around the end of the bar, knocked somebody's gun along the floor peevishly, stuck my hat around the corner of the wood. Nobody shot at it. I stuck one eye and part of my face out.

The door at the back slammed shut. The space in front of it was empty. I got up on my knees and listened. Another door slammed, and a car motor roared.

I tore across the room, threw the door open and plunged through it. It was a phoney. They had slammed the door and started the car just for a come-on. I saw that the flailing arm held a bottle.

For the third time in twenty-four hours I took the count . . .

I came out of this one yelling, with the harsh bite of ammonia in my nose. I swung at a face. But I didn't have anything to swing with. My arms were a couple of four-ton anchors. I threshed around and groaned.

The face in front of me materialised into the bored yet attentive pan of a man with a white coat, a police medico.

"Like it?" he grinned. "Some people used to drink it—with a wine-tonic chaser."

He pulled at me and something nipped at my shoulder and a needle stung me.

"Light shot," he said. "That head of yours is pretty bad. You won't go out."

His face went away. Then I saw a girl's face, hushed, sharp, attentive. Carol Pride.

"You followed me," I said. "You would."

She smiled and moved. Then her fingers were stroking my cheek and I couldn't see her.

"The prowl-car boys just made it," she said. "The crooks had you all wrapped up in a carpet—for shipment in a truck out back."

I couldn't see very well. A big red-faced man in blue slid in front of me. He had a gun in his hand. Somebody groaned somewhere in the background.

She said, "They had two others wrapped up. But they were dead. Ugh!"

"Go on home," I grumbled woozily. "Go write yourself a feature story."

"You used that one before, sap." She went on stroking my cheek.

Lieutenant Reavis came towards me as out of a mist. His face formed itself slowly, grey, attentive, rather stern. It lowered, as if he sat down in front of me, close to me.

"So you had to play it smart," he said in a sharp, edgy voice. "All right, talk. The hell with how your head feels. You asked for it and you got it."

"Gimme a drink."

The lip of a flask touched my mouth. Hot strength ran down my throat. "Thanks. Get Magoon—the biggest one?"

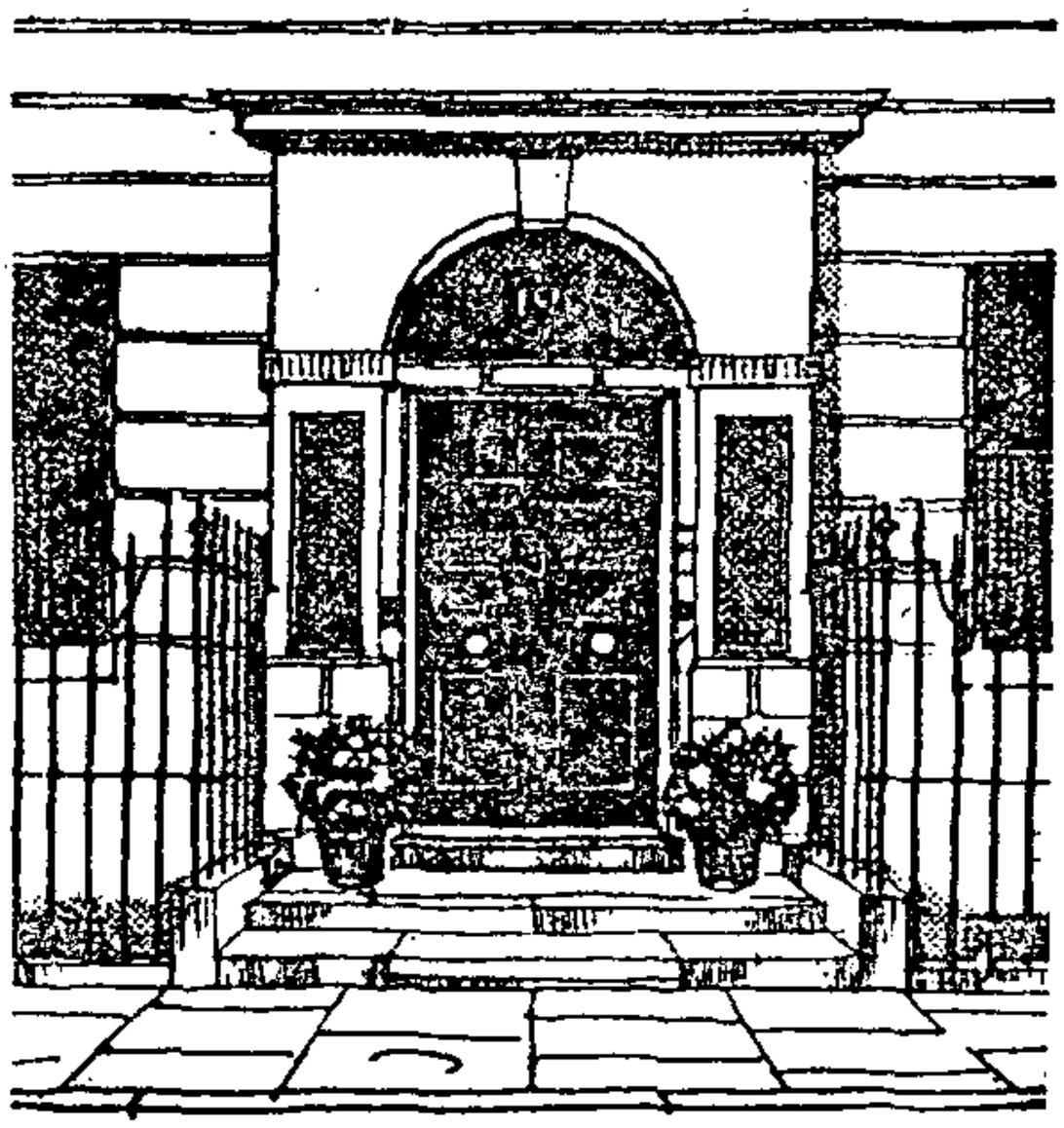
"He's full of lead, but still turning over. On his way downtown now."

"Get the Indian?"

"Huh?" he gulped.

"In some bushes under Peace Cross down on the Palisades. I shot him. I didn't mean to."

"Holy—"



CAN I LEARN TO BE A WRITER?

The broadcast by the BBC entitled " Can I Learn to be a Writer ? " was based on interviews with the senior coach of the London School of Journalism and some of our successful students who spoke of the help they had received in attaining their success.

Their testimony was reinforced by the editress of a great national periodical who spoke of the need for competent instruction in the writing of features intended for publication.

Further tributes to the LSJ were broadcast on January 28th and March 1st.

A warning was given about the doubtful value of the claims made by certain schools. If you seek our advice, you will not be lured by lavish promises or bombarded with letters urging enrolment upon you. If you decide to become a member, you will work under a personal coach and your work will be fully criticised and returned promptly . . . no waiting for weeks or even months. And you will make money.

LSJ Courses cover Articles, Stories, Staff Journalism, Radio Plays, T.V. Plays, Literature, History and Poetry.

The information book gives full details and includes many articles of great value to aspiring writers: It is free on application to :

LONDON SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM (AW)

19 Hertford St., Park Lane, London, W.1. GRO 8250

Member of the Association of British Correspondence Colleges

Reavis went away again and the fingers moved slowly and rhythmically on my cheek.

Reavis came back and sat down again. "Who's the Indian?" he snapped.

"Soukesian's strong-arm man. Soukesian the Psychic. He—"

"We know about him," Reavis interrupted bitterly. "You've been out a whole hour, shamus. The lady told us about those cards. A couple of the boys have gone out there."

"I was there," I said. "At his house. He knows something. I don't know what. He was afraid of me—yet he didn't knock me off. Funny."

"Amateur," Reavis said dryly. "He left that for Moose Magoon. Moose Magoon was tough—up till lately. A record from here to Pittsburgh . . . Here. But take it easy. This is ante mortem confession liquor. Too damn' good for you."

The flask touched my lips again.

"Listen," I said thickly. "This was the stick-up squad. Soukesian was the brains. Lindley Paul was the finger. He must have crossed them on something—"

Reavis said, "Nuts," and just then a phone rang distantly and a voice said, "You, Lieutenant."

Reavis went away. When he came back again he didn't sit down.

"Maybe you're right," he said softly. "Maybe you are, at that. In a house on top of a hill in Brentwood Heights there's a golden-haired guy dead in a chair with a woman crying over him. Suicide. There's a jade necklace on a table beside him."

"Too much death," I said, and fainted.

I woke up in an ambulance. At first I thought I was alone in it. Then I felt her hand and knew I wasn't. I was stone blind now. I couldn't even see light. It was just bandages.

"The doctor's up front with the driver," she said. "You can hold my hand. Would you like me to kiss you?"

"If it doesn't obligate me to anything."

She laughed softly. "I guess you'll live," she said. She kissed me. "Your hair smells of Scotch. Do you take baths in it? The doctor said you weren't to talk."

"They beaned me with a full bottle. Did I tell Reavis about the Indian?"

"Yes."

"Did I tell him Mrs. Prendergast thought Paul was mixed up—"

"You didn't even mention Mrs. Prendergast," she said quickly.

I didn't say anything to that. After a while she said, "This Soukesian, did he look like a lady's man?"

"The doctor said I wasn't to talk," I said.

IT was a couple of weeks later that I drove down to Santa Monica. Ten days of the time I had spent in the hospital, at my own

ENJOY ADDITIONAL INCOME & ESTEEM

THERE'S MONEY IN WRITING

—Once you KNOW HOW

Money is waiting for you—a satisfactory extra income—when you know how to write articles and stories. Men and women like yourself are receiving each month the many thousands of guineas paid to sparetime writers. You, also, can obtain editorial acceptances, gratifying cheques . . plus additional esteem . . plus a stimulating hobby—when you know how to make use of your daily life and experiences.

Find out, then, how you can increase your income by sending for the "Know-How Guide to Writing Success." Now in its 61st edition, this profitable booklet contains practical and inspiring information. It explains how you can gain from the individual KNOW-HOW tuition—how you benefit from the No Sales-No Fees Guarantee—how you can write to sell.

£100 FIRST PRIZE! Over 100 others! Send for FREE Entry Form for easy Letter Contest.

★*FREE Encyclopaedia of Article ideas—10,000 suggestions for articles that can bring you cheques.*

★15 unique Blueprints to successful writing.

★*FREE Pocket Encyclopaedia of Story-Writing — that guides you to fiction success.*

★12 months FREE subscription to "The Writer"—the magazine that tells you what editors are buying.

THE PROOF IS IN THE CHEQUES

Testimonial—"You will be pleased to know that you can tear up my guarantee as I have sold a story, and the fee I received is well in excess of the fees for the course. I wish to thank you for all the guidance received and I am sure that I shall have further success in the future."
—A.H. (Aberdeen.)

I have made about £100 from articles and stories during the last few months.—S.K. (Sheffield)

I have sold a 1,200-word story to "Weekend" for 25 guineas.—Mrs. C. W. (Newbury, Berks.)

I have won the BBC TV-Play Competition for a 60-minute Play. The award is £350.—S.S. (Cinderford, Glos.)

B.A. School of Successful Writing Ltd.
124 New Bond Street, London, W.1.

expense, getting over a bad concussion. Moose Magoon was in the prison ward at the County Hospital about the same time, while they picked seven or eight police slugs out of him. At the end of that time they buried him.

It was a nice warm afternoon. Carol Pride lived on Twenty-fifth Street, in a neat little red-brick house trimmed with white with a hedge in front of it.

Her living-room had a tan figured rug, white-and-rose chairs, a black marble fireplace with tall brass andirons, very high bookcases built back into the walls, rough cream-coloured curtains.

I sat down in a nice soft chair and rested what was left of my head and sipped Scotch and soda while I looked at her fluffed-out brown hair above a high-collar dress that made her face look small, almost childish.

" This is nice Scotch," I said. " You wouldn't like to go riding in an old car, would you? "

" Who am I to sneer at an old car? " she asked.

I grinned at the thin line between her eyebrows.

" I kissed you in that ambulance," she said. " If you remember, don't take it too big. I was just sorry for the way you got your head bashed in."

" I'm a career man," I said. " I wouldn't build on anything like that. Let's go riding. I have to see a blonde in Beverly Hills. I owe her a report."

She stood up and glared at me. " Oh, the Prendergast woman," she said nastily.

The Philip Courtney Prendergasts lived on one of those wide, curving streets where the houses seem to be too close together for their size and the amount of money they represent. A Jap gardener was manicuring a few acres of soft green lawn.

The butler ushered us through zones of silence into a room that was empty at the moment. It had large chesterfields and lounging chairs done in pale yellow leather. A jet of flowers in the corner, another jet on a low table, walls of dully painted parchment, silence, comfort, space, cosiness, a dash of the very modern and a dash of the very old. A very swell room.

Carol Pride sniffed at it.

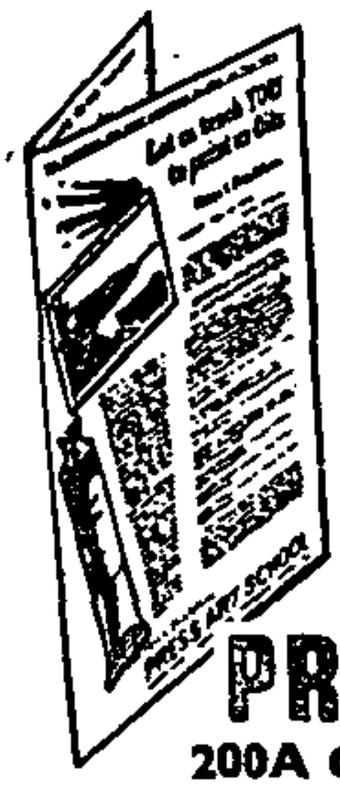
Mrs. Prendergast came in. Pale blue, with a hat and bag to match, all ready to go out. Pale blue gloves slapping lightly at a pale blue thigh. A smile, hints of depths in the black eyes, a high colour, and even before she spoke a nice edge.

She flung both her hands out at us. Carol Pride managed to miss her share. I squeezed mine.

" Gorgeous of you to come," she cried. " How nice to see you both again. I can still taste that whisky you had in your office. Terrible, wasn't it? "

We all sat down. I said, " I didn't really need to take up your time by coming in person, Mrs. Prendergast. Everything turned out all right and you got your beads back."

HEATHER JENNER
MARRIAGE BUREAU
124 New Bond St., W.1
Mayfair 9634
Advice Bureau at the same address



PAINT IN OILS

World-famous artists show you how. Unique Home Study Course, Presentation Outfit, expert personal tuition—beginners a speciality. An absorbing new interest for *you* . . . send for full-colour brochure & 20-page book—FREE.

Percy Bradshaw
PRESS ART SCHOOL
200A College House, Wright's Lane, Kensington, London W.8.

TWO FREE BOOKS FOR NEW WRITERS

Would you like to write articles, stories, radio scripts, etc., in your spare time, and sell what you write ? If so, you should at once send for "SALEABLE WRITING" and "PLOTTING MADE EASY," two valuable books that will give you some "inside" knowledge about writing for pleasure and profit.

BRILLIANTLY "DIFFERENT"

"PLOTTING MADE EASY" is a manual for fiction writers which solves all plotting problems and teaches a really successful method. "SALEABLE WRITING" is forthright and honest, and in addition to much other interesting information, gives details of our modern Home Study Courses in Journalism and Fiction Writing. Both books FREE and without obligation from:—

Dept. of JOURNALISM
SCHOOL OF CAREERS
591, COLLEGE HOUSE
29 Wright's Lane, London, W.8

For expert advice on all gardening matters

read

POPULAR GARDENING

Edited by
GORDON FORSYTH

Every Thursday 6d.

WRITERS!

If you are not selling your MSS we would like to hear from you. Free criticism and market advice on all kinds of literary work is available to Penman Club members the world over. The cost of membership is less than 5d. per week ! Write today for free prospectus (no obligation) to—

Dept. A 1, The Penman Club, Penman House, 70a London Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

MARRIAGE IN MIND!
Why not consult the experts ?
THE ASHLEY MARRIAGE BUREAU
10 Corporation St., Manchester 4
Offers a well established, confidential service
Introductions arranged throughout the country

"Yes. That strange man. How curious of him to be what he was. I knew him too. Did you know that?"

"Soukesian? I thought perhaps you knew him," I said.

"Oh yes. Quite well. I must owe you a lot of money. And your poor head. How is it?"

I smiled at Mrs. Prendergast and she returned my smile with an angel on its back.

"You don't owe me a nickel," I said. "There was just one thing—"

"Impossible. I must. But let's have a little Scotch, shall we?" She held her bag on her knees, pressed something under the chair, said, "A little Scotch and soda, Vernon." She beamed. "Cute, eh? You can't even see the mike. This house is just full of little things like that. Mr. Prendergast loves them. This one talks in the butler's pantry."

The butler came in with a tray and mixed drinks, handed them around, and went out.

Over the rim of her glass Mrs. Prendergast said, "You were nice not to tell the police I suspected Lin Paul of being—well, you know. Or that I had anything to do with your going to that awful beer parlour. By the way, how did you explain that?"

"Easy. I told them Paul told me himself. He was with you, remember?"

"But he didn't, of course?" I thought her eyes were a little sly now.

"He told me practically nothing. That was the whole truth. And of course he didn't tell me he'd been blackmailing you."

I seemed to be aware that Carol Pride had stopped breathing. Mrs. Prendergast went on looking at me over the rim of her glass. Her face had, for a brief moment, a sort of half-silly, nymph-surprised-while-bathing expression. Then she put her glass down slowly and opened her bag in her lap and got a handkerchief out and bit it. There was silence.

"That," she said in a low voice, "is rather fantastic, isn't it?"

I grinned at her coldly. "The police are a lot like the newspapers, Mrs. Prendergast. For one reason and another they can't use everything they get. But that doesn't make them dumb. Reavis isn't dumb. He doesn't really think, any more than I do, that this Soukesian person was really running a tough jewel-gang. He couldn't have handled people like Moose Magoon for five minutes. They'd have walked all over his face just for exercise. Yet Soukesian did have the necklace. That needs explaining. I think he bought it—from Moose Magoon. For the ten-grand pay-off supplied by you—and for some other little consideration likely paid in advance to get Moose to pull the job."

Mrs. Prendergast lowered her lids until her eyes were almost shut, then she lifted them again and smiled. It was a rather ghastly smile.

Carol Pride didn't move beside me.

"Somebody *wanted* Lindley Paul killed," I said. "That's obvious."

"Wha—what," the blonde woman asked huskily, "has all this to do with me?"

Her face was a mask. Her eyes held a warm bitterness like poisoned honey. One of her hands was roving around inside her bag. It became quiet, inside the bag.

"Moose Magoon would pull a job like that," I bored on, "if he was paid for it. And Moose was an Armenian, so Soukesian might have known how to reach him. And Soukesian was just the type to go skirt-simple over a blonde like you and be willing to do anything she wanted him to do, even have a man killed, especially if that man was a rival, especially if he was the kind of a man who rolled around on floor cushions and maybe even took candid camera photos of his lady friends."

"Take a drink," Carol Pride said icily. "You're drooling. You don't have to tell this baby she's a tramp. She knows it. But how the hell could anybody blackmail her? You've got to have a reputation to be blackmailed."

"Shut up!" I snapped. "The less you've got the more you'll pay to keep it." I watched the blonde woman's hand move suddenly inside her bag. "Don't bother to pull the gun," I told her. "I know they won't hang you. I just wanted you to know you're not kidding anybody and that that trap in the beer parlour was rigged to finish me off when Soukesian lost his nerve and that you were the one that sent me in there."

But she pulled the gun out just the same and held it on her pale blue knee and smiled at me.

Carol Pride threw a glass at her. She dodged and the gun went off. A slug went softly and politely into the parchment-covered wall, high up, making no more sound than a finger going into a glove.

The door opened and an enormously tall, thin man strolled into the room.

"Shoot me," he said. "I'm only your husband."

The blonde looked at him. For just a short moment I thought she might be going to take him up on it.

Then she just smiled a little more and put the gun back into her bag and reached for her glass. "Listening in again," she said dully. "Some day you'll hear something you won't like."

The tall, thin man took a leather cheque book out of his pocket and cocked an eyebrow at me and said, "How much will keep you quiet—permanently?"

I stared at him. "You heard what I said in here?"

"I think so. The pick-up's pretty good this weather. I believe you were accusing my wife of having something to do with somebody's death, was it not?" I kept on staring at him.

"Well—how much do you want?" he snapped. "I won't argue with you. I'm used to blackmailers."

"Make it a million," I said. "And she just took a shot at us. That will be four bits extra."

The blonde laughed crazily and the laugh turned into a screech and then into a yell. The next thing she was rolling on the floor screaming and kicking her legs around.

The tall man went over to her quickly and bent down and hit her in the face with his open hand. You could have heard that smack a mile off. When he straightened up again his face was a dusky red and the blonde was lying there sobbing.

"I'll show you to the door," he said, "You can call at my office tomorrow."

"What for?" I asked, and took my hat.

I took Carol Pride's arm and steered her out of the room. We left the house silently. The Jap gardener had just pulled a bit of weed root out of the lawn and was holding it up and sneering at it.

We drove away from there, towards the foothills.

"I didn't get the big warm feeling," I said. "I didn't get to smack anybody down. I didn't make it stick."

"She probably didn't plan it in cold blood," she said. "She just got mad and resentful and somebody sold her an idea. A woman like that takes men and gets tired of them and throws them away and they go crazy trying to get her back. It might have been just between the two lovers—Paul and Soukesian. But Mr. Magoon played rough."

"She sent me to that beer parlour," I said. "That's enough for me."

I held her. She was shivering.

A car came up behind us and the driver stood on his horn. I listened to it for a little while, then I let go of Carol Pride and got out of the roadster and walked back. He was a big man, behind the wheel of a sedan. "Lover's Lane is farther up in the hills," he said sharply. "Get out of there before I push you out."

"Blow your horn just once more," I begged him. "Just once. Then tell me which side you want the black eye."

He took a police captain's badge out of his vest pocket. Then he grinned. Then we both grinned. It wasn't my day.

I got back into the roadster and turned it around and started back towards Santa Monica. "Let's go home and drink some more Scotch," I said. "Your Scotch."

© Helga Greene Literary Agency 1964

SOLUTION TO THE PUZZLE ON PAGE 117

One boy takes the barrel organ across, leaves it on the opposite side and returns. The two boys then cross, one is left and the other returns. The wife then crosses alone, she remains and the boy takes the boat back. The two boys then cross again, one remains and the other returns. The man then crosses alone and the boy brings the boat back. The two boys then cross, the son remains and the other boy returns with the boat.

Leisure-Pleasure

Being a monthly notebook for the man who works like a dog (who doesn't!) and deserves to enjoy his time off.

This month we've started for no particular reason—except it's always a pleasing thought—with wine, and the pleasures of a warm evening, the choice of:

THERE are few things in the world more wonderful than a perfect summer's evening in the countryside. The shadows of the trees grow longer, the outline of the hills sharpens against the setting sun, the last bees speed home to the hives, but the scent that is this country's own lingers on. The setting is perfect for opening the picnic basket at Glyndebourne, or even a meal in the garden, or supper on the terrace after the theatre. Which brings us to what to drink with it?

One's mind turns straight away to the Loire, that country of long and lovely dusks. To the dry freshness of a Muscadet, all the more pleasant if sea food is on your menu. Or to a wine of Anjou, a medium-dry white like a Cru Hubert, or a Rosé. The Muscadet or the Rosé will cost about 10s. per bottle, the other about 12s. Unusual, with a pleasant tang, is the Anjou Nectarose, costing 9s.

The Germans are very fond of eating outdoors, and their wines match up perfectly. They like to start with a glass of sparkling wine, an excellent habit, and there is now a wide range available in this country. It includes Cantor, 14s. 6d., and Rheingold, 20s., shipped by Duthie and Co.; Henkell Trocken, 19s. 6d., Henkell's Schloss Biebrich, 16s. 6d., and Deinhard's Sekt, 20s. Not, you will agree, madly extravagant.

Or try Blanquette de Limoux Brut, if you prefer a French sparkling wine. About 16s. 6d. per bottle. This can be used also as a dessert wine, while the German sparkling wines are delicious with strawberries dropped into them, if you've brought PICNIC BASKET NO. 1 with you.

The light hocks and moselles are fine for outdoor drinking. Stowells have a most pleasant Liebfraumilch which is good value for money in litre bottles at a little over 13s. And talking of litres, completely new on the market here are the Carafino Blanc, Rouge and Rosé, shipped by Peter Dominic. You can buy in litre bottles at 8s. 10d. plus 6d. deposit on the bottle, or at 19s. 6d. for the half gallon plus 2s. 6d. deposit on a quite elegant glass pitcher. They are honest vins ordinaires without pretensions, but the white, well chilled, makes agreeable supper-time drinking.

Both the South Africans and Australians have climates that lend themselves to outdoor drinking, and so to the right wines. There is, for example, a charming South African white wine—a K.W.V. Late Vintage Cape Paarl. It is made from the Steen grape, and as the grapes are picked when over-ripe it has fullness and a pleasant slightly sweet after-taste—matching it to our strawberries and cream. Or if it is shipped by Brown, Gore and Welch it costs less than 11s. per bottle.

Here are two Australian wines to try, if you want Australian—Smith's Yalumba Carte d'Or and Gramp's Orlando Barossa Riesling costing about 11s. and 10s.

Of course, all these prices may vary a bit.

But to begin at the beginning, what goes into the picnic basket? Nobody, and especially a man, wants to slave over a hot stove in warm weather, and least of all at the weekend. But nor does the tepid soup, limp lettuce and cold anonymous meat the average hotel en route to the coast provides do much to impress either you or your companion. Much better to take a civilised lunch with you, quietly prepared in the cool of the evening before. Both of these menus travel well and are easy enough to do.

PICNIC BASKET NO. 1:

Vichysoisse soup
Jellied trout
Strawberries and cream

Don't attempt to make the soup; the tinned condensed stuff is good, and even better if you add an equal quantity of top of the milk and some chopped chives. Shake well together, pour

into a vacuum flask, add a couple of blocks of ice and leave in the fridge until you want to pack it. You'll need to stir before you serve it.

For the jellied trout: 2 trout; a small glass of white wine; 1 packet (Symington's or Maggi's) aspic jelly; a few frozen shrimps; 1 small tin asparagus tips; and a few small round tomatoes.

Poach the trout in the wine for twelve minutes. Leave to cool in the liquor while you make the aspic, carefully reading the instructions on the packet cover. You will need half a pint. You'll now want an oblong refrigerator dish; pour in a little of the cooled aspic, and arrange the two or three little tomatoes, a few shrimps, and a few asparagus tips on it. Set. Drain the trout, carefully put them in place, cover with aspic, decorate with tomatoes, shrimps and asparagus, and leave to set.

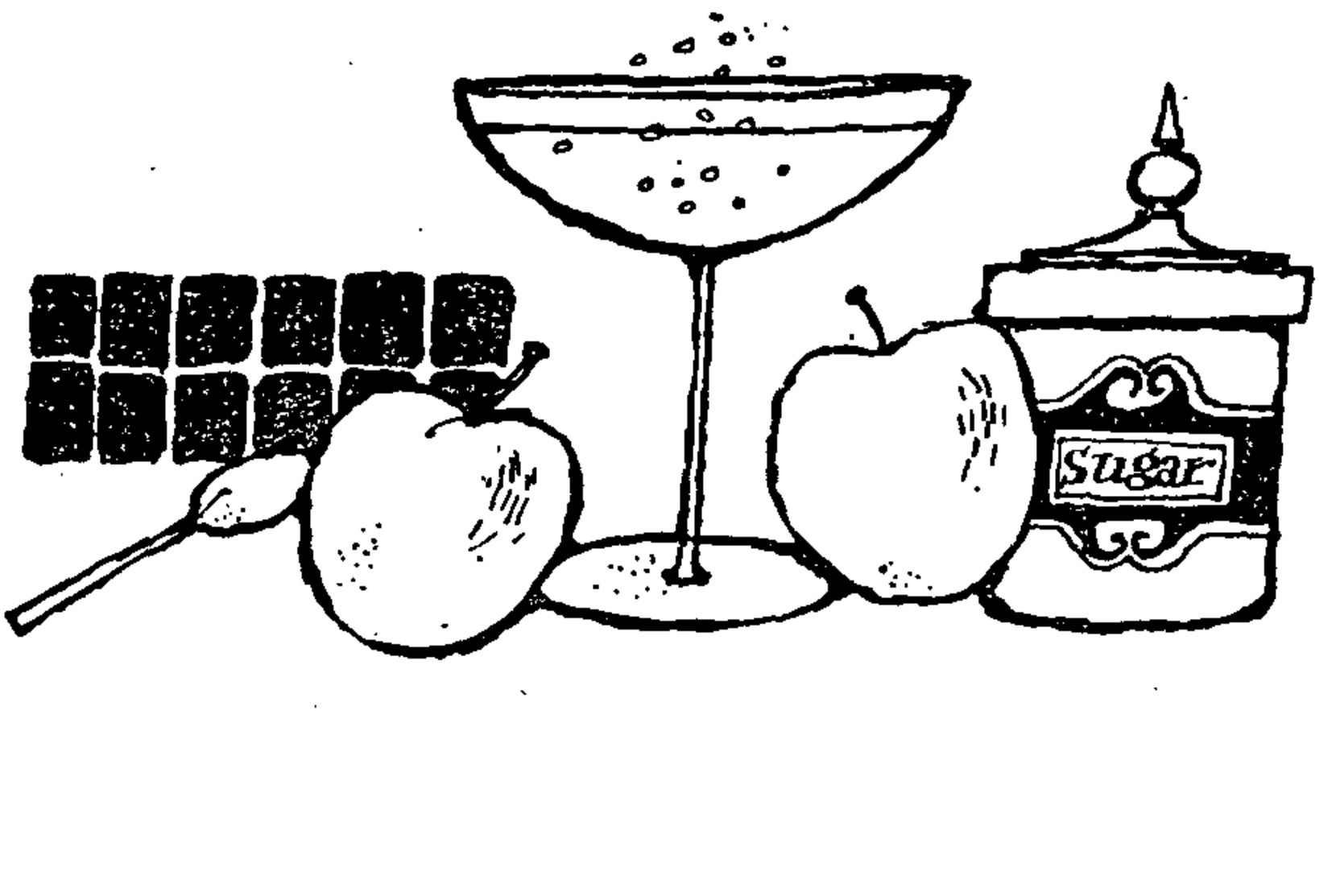
Cos lettuce, washed just before you set out, and brown bread and butter round off this perfection.

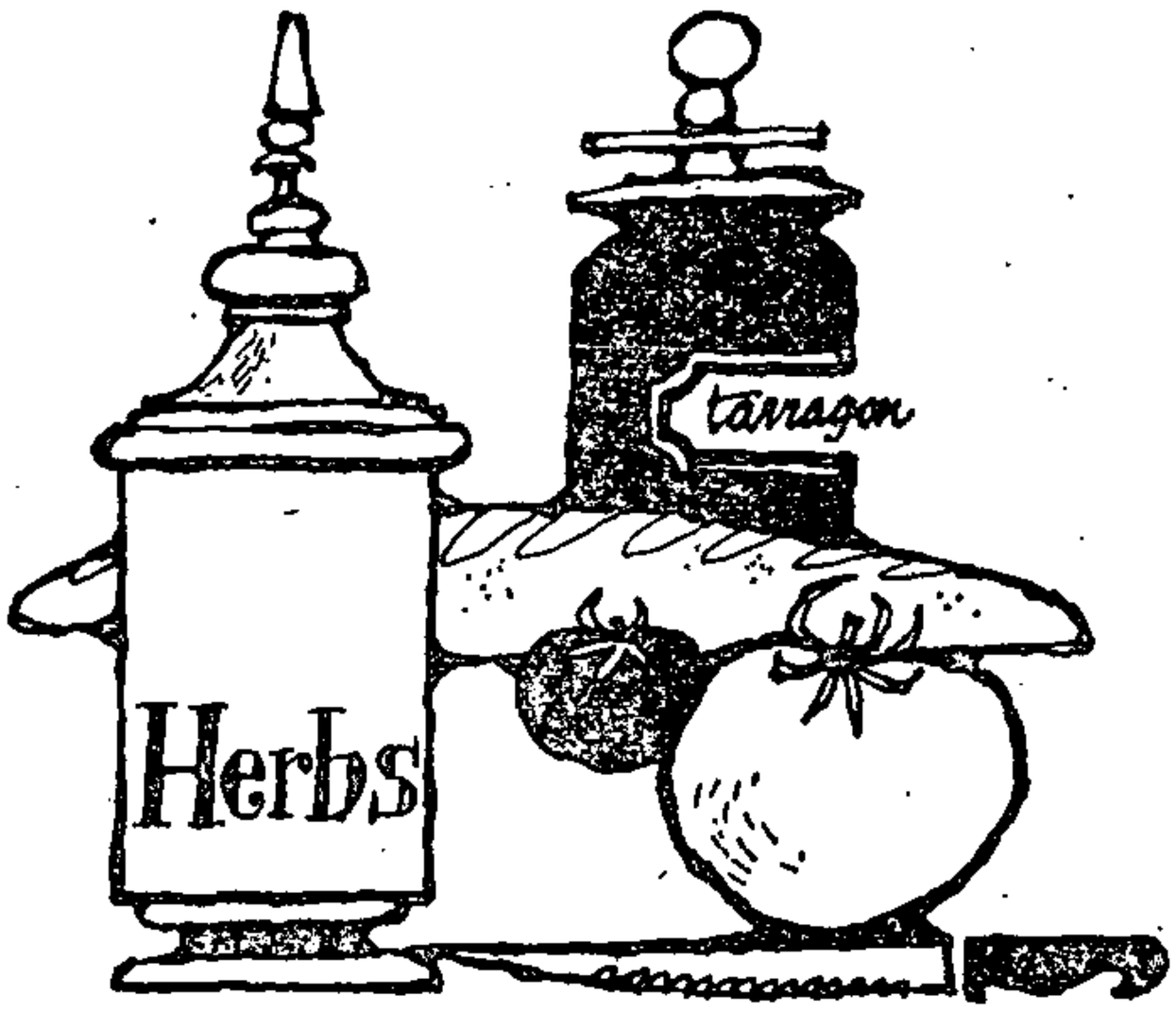
PICNIC BASKET NO. 2:

Taramasalata
Swiss Veal Loaf
Green Salad
Pears-and-cheese

Taramasalata translated may just be a fish paste, but made this way it's irresistible. Serve with Ryvita or brown bread and butter. You'll need: ¼ lb. smoked cod's roe; 3 ounces soft white breadcrumbs; 3 tablespoons olive oil; 1 teaspoon lemon juice; a very little onion juice; a dash of cayenne pepper.

Skin the roe, mix all the ingredients together, beating well if you do it in a bowl, or two minutes in an electric blender. The result is a fluffy pink paste, which will travel perfectly in any screw-capped jar.





For the veal loaf you'll need: ½ lb. veal, choose lean meat; ¼ lb. cooked ham; 1 hard-boiled egg; a very little grated lemon rind (don't overdo it as it spoils the flavour); ½ ounce Nelson or Cox's powdered gelatine; ½ pint stock (made, of course, with Knorr or Maggi beef cube); pepper and salt; a little chopped parsley.

Find a Pyrex round dish, or cake tin. Mix the seasoning, rind and parsley together. Slice the egg, and put a few slices at the bottom of the dish. Cut the veal into little squares, the ham in small slices. Arrange veal, ham and egg in layers, scattering a little of the seasoning mixture over each layer. Dissolve the gelatine in the hot stock, and stir well. Pour over the meat, cover with two layers of greased paper, and cook 2½ hours in the oven—(gas 3½, electricity about 300 degrees). Take out and immediately press a plate on to the top of the dish and put a weight on top of that.

Leave for the night. It will turn out as a jellied mould, but leave it as it is if you are taking it in the car.

Now make an absolutely super dressing for the salad by adding thin cream to half a jar of Heinz Sandwich Spread and shaking like mad! This too will travel in its own jar.

For the pears-and-cheese, you can choose either canned or fresh pears. If fresh, peel them, halve them and dip them in lemon juice. If canned, drain well. Just before you pack the basket, take a packet of Philadelphia Cream Cheese and a little cream, and mash them together to about the consistency of soft, whipped cream. This mixture goes between the pears rather like a sandwich.

These quantities specified will serve two people, of course!

The last light has gone from the setting sun and the moon is coming up. The meal is over: spoil yourself and end it with a wine instead of a liqueur? A perfect choice would be one of the lovely muscat wines of Alsace.

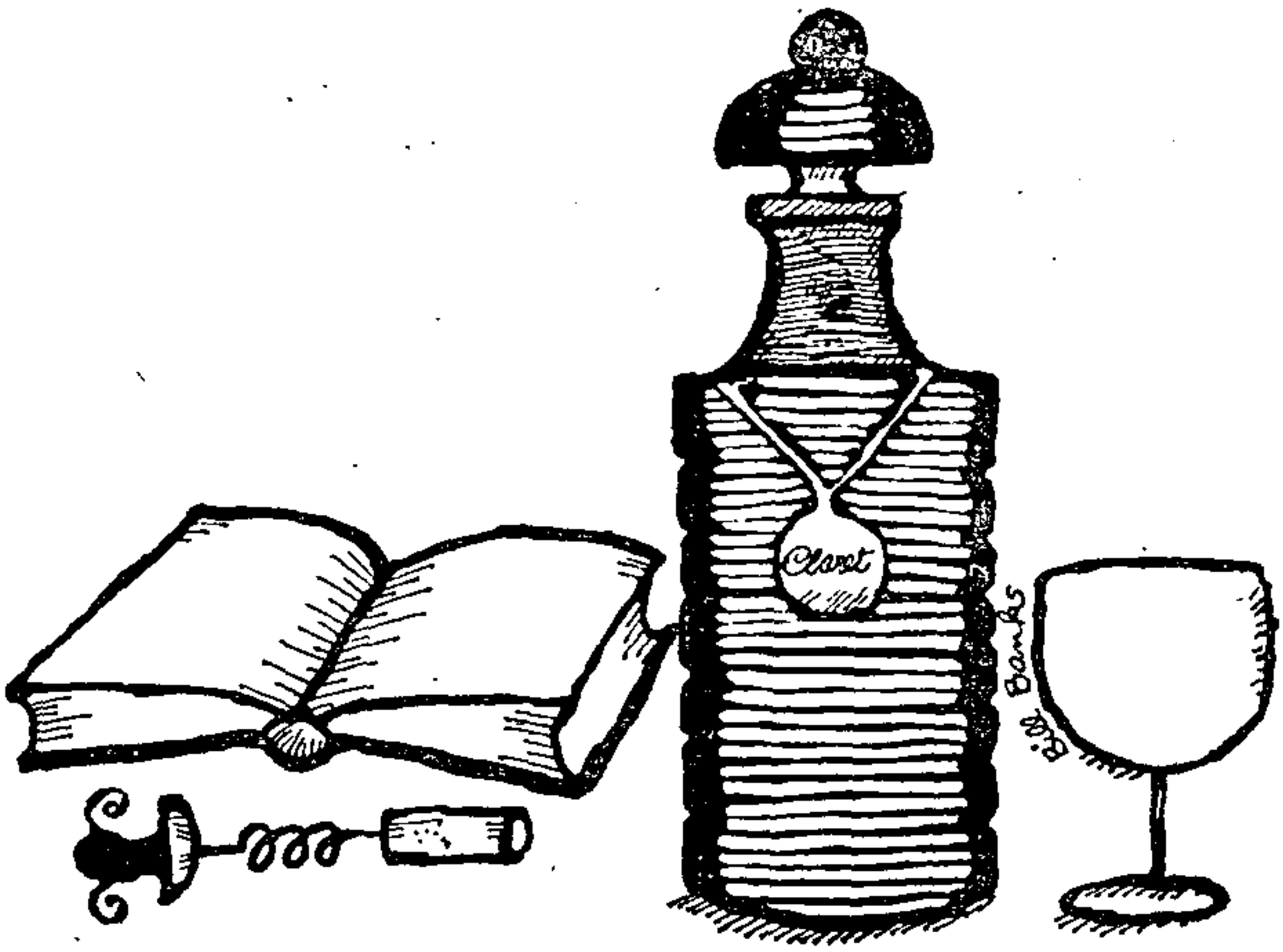
The 1959 F. E. Hugel Reserve Exceptionelle, quite superb, costs about 27s. per bottle, and the Muscat Gustave Lorenz of 1961 is lighter and cheaper, about 13s. per bottle. The wonderful "nose" of an Alsatian Muscat matches perfectly the bouquet of a rose garden at nightfall . . .

Back home again, let's for the moment talk about books and records.

Argosy readers are well acquainted with David Walker's infectious sort of fun (remember, for instance, *Geordie?*) His new comedy-thriller, *Winter of Madness*, must go on the holiday reading list. Again the highlands are the background for every sort of extraordinary happening, and what sheer pleasure it is just to sit back and really laugh.

Warm weather reading should include the new contender for the Ian Fleming-James Bond stakes, *Passport to Oblivion* by James Leasor. Doctor Jason Love, a quiet country practitioner who gets caught up despite himself in the most shattering adventures, has enormous charm and personality, with none of the irritating arrogances and affectation of his opposite number, 007. But otherwise the mixture is very much the same—sex, sadism, lots of excitement . . . strongly recommended for a lazy afternoon.

Choice of the Crime Club is Ngaio Marsh's *Dead Water*. A little disappointing perhaps, compared with the usual high standard this Australian writer sets herself, but none the less, not to be missed by admirers of the suave Superintendent Alleyn and his faithful henchman, Sergeant Fox.



Titled *Funeral in Berlin*, number 3 of the "secret file" series comes from Len Deighton with his unnamed laconic agent who appeared in *Horse Under the Water* and *The Ipcress File*. Full of double-agents and famous scientists sought for on both sides of the wall, this one boasts of a charmer with an American accent and red hair who wears jewellery even in the bathtub. Readable but very, very complex.

Two for the permanent bookshelves:

Everyman's Dictionary of Dates. *Everyman's Dictionary of Literary Biography*—a really worthwhile reference book giving 2,300 concise up-to-date English and American biographies.

But the choice from among the month's numerous paperbacks is undoubtedly *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, William Shirer's superb reporting of Hitler and wartime Germany to the grotesque climax in the Berlin bunker in 1945.

Room left only for two records: for the serious-minded, beg, borrow or buy Sir Malcolm Sargent ("Flash Harry" to Prom. fans) happily conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in a small anthology of Vaughan Williams' entrancing music *The Wasps, Fantasia on Greensleeves, Serenade to Music and Toward the Unknown Region*. All on one L.P.

For pop fiends, one of the newest groups, The Breakaways, have made their first record *That's How it Goes*.

This time it's three girls who come from, surprise, surprise, Liverpool.

Books reviewed:

James Leasor, *Passport to Oblivion*, (Heinemann 18s.)
Ngaio Marsh, *Dead Water*, (Collins Crime Club 15s.)
Len Deighton, *Funeral in Berlin*, (Jonathan Cape 18s.)
David Walker, *Winter of Madness*, (Collins 18s.)
Revised by Audrey Butler, M.A., *Everyman's Dictionary of Dates*, (Dent 25s.)
D. C. Browning, M.A., B. Litt., *Everyman's Dictionary of Literary Biography*, (Dent 20s.).
William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, (Pan 12s. 6d.)

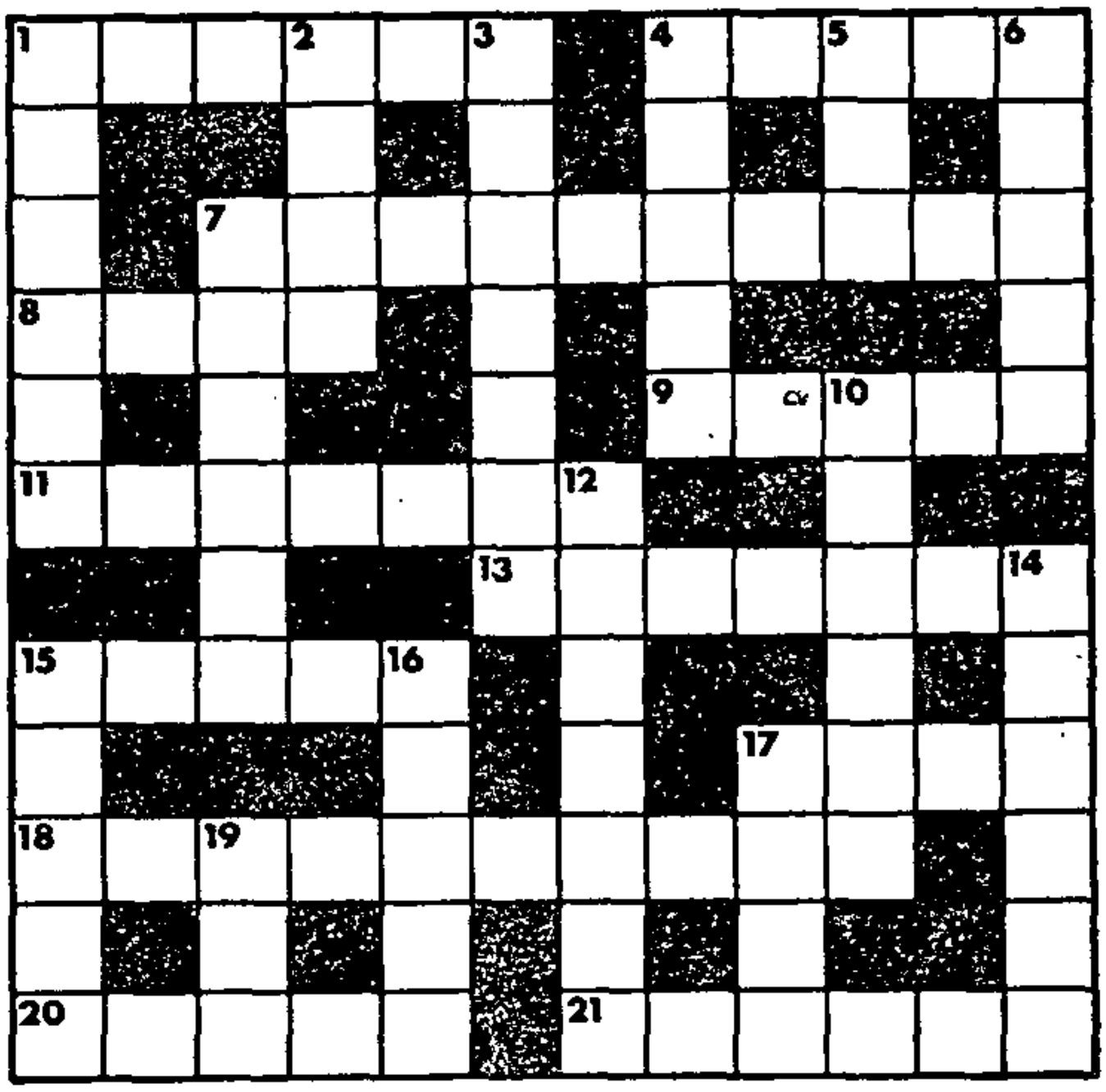
Records:

Vaughan Williams' Anthology, H.M.V. (mono only), CLP 1729.
The Breakaways, *That's How It Goes*.

TEN MINUTE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Detachment (6).
4 Ray of light (5).
7 Game bet on food? (10).
8 Brave act (4).
9 Having a ball? (5).
11 Out of action (7).
13 Go on, gambol! (7).
15 Forceful papers? (5).
17 Hit by hand (4).
18 Choice (10).
20 Small house (5).
21 Pay up (6).



DOWN

1 Basic make-up (6).
2 Way (4).
3 Compared (7).
4 Resistance lasting one night? (5).
5 Intent (3).
6 Slight colouring (5).
7 Vocal insect? (6).
10 Fool (6).
12 Stray (7).
14 Strong drink (6).
15 Schoolchild (5).
16 Setting (5).
17 Kind of free—in Edinburgh? (4).
19 Purpose (3).

(Solution on page 117)

WINNER: CROSSWORD COMPETITION No. 2

We are pleased to announce that the following reader has been awarded the Schick Superspeed Shaver, the prize in our April Competition:

A. J. Fox Esq., Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.

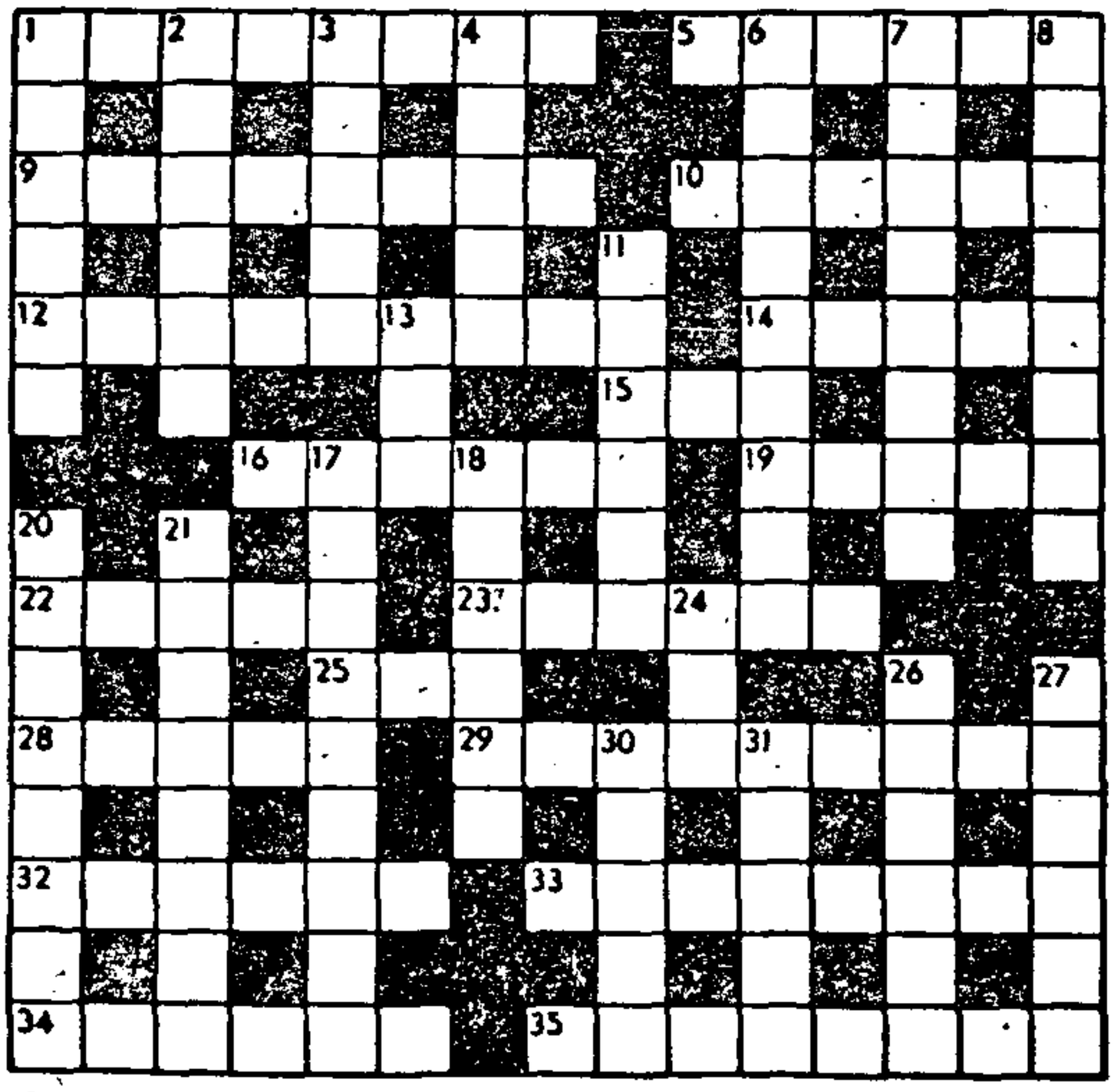
SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 2 (APRIL)

ACROSS. 1, *Law calf.* 4, *Astarte.* 9, *Hippocrates.* 11, *Veal.* 12, *Stir.* 13, *Eternal.* 15, *Andhra.* 16, *Narrow.* 17, *Pea.* 19, *Shawms.* 20, *Loathe.* 22, *Ice.* 25, *Inkpot.* 27, *Rimmed.* 28, *Nigeria.* 29, *Lens.* 31, *Levi.* 32, *Giant killer.* 33, *Granada.* 34, *Foramen.*

DOWN. 1, *Latvian.* 2, *Coil.* 3, *Laputa.* 5, *Seaman.* 6, *Ayes.* 7, *Escrows.* 8, *Ecarté.* 9, *Handshaking.* 10, *Star Chamber.* 13, *Erewhon.* 14, *Latakia.* 17, *Psi.* 18, *Ale.* 21, *Kipling.* 23, *Cheeky.* 24, *Addison.* 26, *Tinned.* 27, *Rialto.* 30, *Sign.* 31, *Leda.*

ARGOSY CROSSWORD

Solution next month



ACROSS

1 Recreation—in low dance hall? (8).

5 Two below par birds, on course (6).

9 Get off this plantation filly! (8).

10 Many jump in to see composer (6).

12 Time I made a quick change (9).

14 Final approach to fish (5).

15 Spoil the beginning of marriage? (3).

16 Blow for prisoner of war returning all in (6).

19 Rock—the Spanish vehicle? (5).

22 Animal I part exchange (5).

23 Casing with internal warmth (6).

25 Cork citizen's caress (3).

28 Slow time comes to nothing (5).

29 Does it get the bird? On the contrary! (5, 4).

32 Patrick's antics when father's gone (6).

33 Little Diana is a greedy thing, to start with, so we differ (8).

34 No coppers? Almost a pity and certainly rather rum (6).

35 We turn S.E. for foster mother (3-5).

DOWN

1 Bored king is needled when Reg leaves (6).

2 See Sam inside—opens panto cave (6).

3 This way provides a dramatic night out in New York (5).

4 Girl gives nothing back to father! (5).

6 Bare thorn! Disgusting, isn't it? (9).

7 Aid to smooth words, no doubt! (8).

8 Golden maker of hay! (8).

11 Shrine—on the face of it (6).

13 I have 50-50 chance of becoming poorly (3).

17 Does the pilot keep his money here? (3-6).

18 Lend me your ears (6).

20 This heel is needle sharp (8).

21 Mental state of golf pro? (4, 4).

24 Lawless—no less. A boring tool (3).

26 Jug is purer if nothing is taken away (6).

27 Briefly, I'm a French father. Shocking! (6).

30 Realise, if the Spanish go, financial profit results (5).

31 Many earn less and long for more (5).

Printed in England by PERCY BROTHERS LTD., THE HOTSPUR PRESS, MANCHESTER, 1, and published on the tenth of each month by FLEETWAY PUBLICATIONS LTD., FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4. Subscription Rates: Inland, £2 11s. for 12 months, £1 5s. 6d. for 6 months. Overseas, £2 11s. for 12 months, £1 5s. 6d. for 6 months. Sole Agents: Australasia, Messrs. GORDON & GOTCH LTD.; South Africa, CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY LTD.; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Messrs. KINGSTONS LTD. ARGOSY is sold subject to the following conditions, namely, that it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price as shown on the cover; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

WRITERS of QUALITY appear in

argosy

H. E. Bates
Paul Gallico
Gerald Kersh
Rhys Davies
C. S. Forester
Georges Simenon
Ray Bradbury
Michael Gilbert
Victor Canning
David Walker
William Haggard

ALL THE BEST STORIES EVERY MONTH 3/6

a Tracey

Short Story Writing

Everyone has a story in his life. No matter how humdrum that life has been it contains at least one episode which would, properly handled by a writer, entertain readers.

But there are more fictional possibilities than that. The trained story writer realises that every day of one's life holds fictional material.

If you have aptitude you can be trained to work ideas into plots and make stories of them which editors would be glad to buy.

Learn the essential technique by post—the Regent Institute way—under the stimulating guidance of successful writers.

Earning While Learning

You are shown how to get plots (the R.I. Plot Finder—a valuable aid—taps dozens of sources of ideas), how to construct, how to write dialogue, how to prepare MSS, and HOW TO SELL THEM.

Many R.I. students have sold short stories while learning. "The story I submitted for Lesson No. 3, after amen ment as you recommended, has be accepted by *Argosy*," reports a studer Another writes: "Perhaps you would lil to know that the two stories you advis me to submit for publication have bec accepted by the markets you suggested

★ Send today for HOW TO SUCCEED AS A WRITER

Take the first step now by sending t the Regent Institute for a free copy c "How to Succeed as a Writer," whic contains striking facts about the openin for new writers today.

It shows how the tuition is planned t help you to get into print as soon a possible—how you can make extr income, *wherever you live.* Now is th time to take up writing—the most profi able of hobbies.

Write today for this interesting bookle —without any obligation.

FREE CRITICISM

If you would like to have a free expert criticism send a short original MS. (a story or an article) to the Regent Institute *Write your name and address in BLOCK capitals on the MS.*

Member of the Association of British Correspondence Colleges

THE REGENT INSTITUTI

(Dept. AR/15E), Palace Gate, London, W.

Over 1,950 newspapers and periodicals have bought stories, articles, etc., from R.I. students —a record without parallel